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THE RURAL WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY
WOMEN'S INSTITUTES IN ALBERTA FROM 1909 TO 1940

by

©

Shelley Anne Marie Bosetti

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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submitted by Shelley Anne Marie Bosetti

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in History of Education.

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Robert J. Carney

David Mills

Date 6 September 1983

DEDICATION

To my family
Anne, Rino, Lynn, Bruce, and Terry

ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this thesis has been to examine the role which the Women's Institutes in Alberta between 1909 and 1940 played in the lives of rural women. Women's Institutes were more than literary clubs, suffrage societies, or temperance organizations. They touched upon these topics; yet they were much broader in scope. Essentially, what the Institutes sought to do was to answer the two major needs of rural women: their need for social interaction with other women, and their need for mental stimulation of an educational nature. That the Institutes met these needs successfully was manifest in their programmes of activities and in the strength and longevity of the movement. The sincerity with which the Institutes devoted their energies toward enhancing the education of their members was well known to contemporaries. To many, the Women's Institutes were known as the 'Rural Women's University'. It was a title the Institutes treasured.

Chapter I, which formed the introduction of the thesis, placed Women's Institutes within the context of the rise and proliferation of women's organizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A review of the literature on Women's Institutes uncovered grave deficiencies in the availability of materials on the subject and highlighted the necessity of consulting primary source material such as minute books, correspondence, reports, records, and women who were active in the movement prior to 1940. The organization of the thesis,

which was based upon a theoretical framework for social movements, reflected the assumption that the Women's Institutes in Alberta comprised a social movement.

Chapter II considered the rise of Women's Institutes within the context of discontent that was present in Canadian society at the national, regional, and rural levels.

Chapter III traced the mobilization of the movement in terms of its ideology, its leadership, and its methods of communication. Examples of the various methods by which local branches of Women's Institutes were organized in Alberta were presented.

Chapters IV and V dealt with the activities and relationships of Women's Institutes at the local and provincial levels. Chapter IV centered upon the organization's internal activities which proved to be of an educational and social nature. Chapter V concentrated upon the organization's community activities; some of these involved rural schools, war work, aid to victims, medical facilities, social events, the erection of community buildings, and work with young girls. The chapter concluded with a chronological survey of the relationship between the Women's Institutes and the Alberta provincial government.

Chapter VI, which formed the conclusion of the thesis, credited the Women's Institutes with enhancing the lives of rural women in Alberta by dispelling loneliness and isolation and replacing these with opportunities for developing a positive outlook on life through social interaction and mental stimulation. A Postscript outlined the activities of the Women's Institutes from 1940 to 1983.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Canadian history witnessed a new phenomenon, the rise and proliferation of women's organizations. A Census taken in 1911 placed the number of Canadian women between fifteen and eighty years of age at two million one hundred and eighty-six thousand. Two hundred and fifty thousand of this number belonged to national organizations; or, roughly eleven per cent of the female population.[1] The most prominent group of women in the club movement were those having some leisure time to devote to activities outside the home. The wealthier of these, of course, had the greatest amount of leisure time and devoted a considerable amount of it to club work. Another major group of participants in these organizations were the educated. Female graduates of professions such as dentistry, law, medicine, teaching, and nursing were active participants in the movement.[2] Rural women, too, found the club movement attractive. Typically, the clubwoman was a middle aged, married person whose children were at least partially grown up, and who had some leisure time to undertake activities outside the home.[3]

Something that could not be measured and accounted for in quantitative form was the value of women's organizations to Canadian society. Yet the good directly or indirectly wrought by these clubs was manifest in a number of areas. Women in organizations were responsible for educating public and government opinion regarding female suffrage; they worked towards better laws for women and children; they were active in charitable work and in war work; they helped to improve rural schools; they had technical and domestic science instruction introduced into curricula; they popularized restraint and moderation in drinking habits; and they performed numerous community services in the form of annual picnics, school fairs, dances, card parties, the building of hospitals, maternity homes, community halls, and libraries. In short, the activities of women's organizations were always aimed at the betterment of something, be it the home, the community, or society in general.

Women's organizations were valuable to the members themselves. Clubs got women out of the home and interested in society.[4] In addition to broadening the interests of women, clubs provided them with experience in the rules and methods of operating business meetings. For some women, particularly those elected to positions as officers in national organizations, club work became a second career.[5] Clubs were extremely valuable in educating female members. It was often the case that married women had sacrificed their personal ambitions in order to devote themselves to their marriages and children.[6] Upon reaching middle age, these women turned to clubs as a second opportunity to reevaluate their lives and learn new skills.[7] Clubs provided members with a rounded education. There was music and dramatic readings. Papers were presented on a variety of topics including science, art, literature, education, philanthropy, drama, and domestic science. These papers, and the discussions which followed, stimulated women's thoughts and directed their reading into broader fields.[8] The clubwoman's interest in education was not incidental or by-the-way. Many clubs were conscious of the educational responsibility to their members.[9] In the majority of cases, the only costs incurred by women for this education were membership dues.

The Women's Institute movement was a part of this general club phenomenon in Canada. What made the Women's Institutes special was that they were a Canadian creation. The first Institute was organized by Mrs. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless on 19 February 1897, in the village of Stoney Creek, Ontario. From this inauspicious beginning the movement spread across Canada and around the world. It would be impossible to do justice to a movement of such breadth and scope since so much of it has yet to be recorded. However, it is possible to examine an interesting facet of this phenomenon, which is the Women's Institute movement in Alberta between the years of 1909 and 1940. Some of the major issues which will be addressed include the circumstances under which the Women's Institutes arose in Alberta, that is, why they arose, who the leaders were, and what techniques they used; the contributions of the Institutes to the educational, social, and cultural life of Alberta; and an assessment of where the movement is now.

Anyone attempting to research the Women's Institutes via secondary sources will be struck immediately by the fact that there is a grave paucity of information. The best book on the topic of

Women's Institutes is that written by Annie Walker, Edith M. Collins, and M. McIntyre Hood entitled Fifty Years of Achievement: In Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Women's Institutes of Ontario. This book is an excellent source on the Women's Institutes in Ontario; its treatment of the movement in that province is quite thorough. The book also contains accounts of the Institute movement in the other provinces, although these accounts are very brief by comparison. However, to be fair, the book does not aspire to relate the entire Canadian movement. The book is inadequate from a research perspective in that the sources used are not footnoted. Fifty Years of Achievement was sponsored by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, and it was published in 1948. While the book was written no less than thirty-five years ago, it remains, in the opinion of the writer, the best source on the Women's Institute movement in Ontario. Another good source on Women's Institutes, possibly the 'second best', is Ruth Howes' article "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, 1857-1910." This article may be found in Mary Quayle's The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and Their Times, published in 1966. The information provided on Women's Institutes includes an account of the founding of the first Institute at Stoney Creek, and the spread of Women's Institutes overseas. However, much of the article is devoted to Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless herself, and her involvement in other organizations in addition to Women's Institutes, particularly the National Council of Women of Canada and the Young Women's Christian Association. John William Robertson Scott's The Story of the Women's Institute Movement in

England & Wales & Scotland is a thick volume on the movement in the British Isles. Although this book was published in 1925, it still is worth reading both for the detailed information that Robertson Scott imparts, as well as for his highly amusing manner of delivery.

Sources on Women's Institutes tend to be difficult to uncover unless the researcher is already cognizant of the material available on Canadian women's organizations. The chief difficulty is that the titles of the books often belie their contents. Sources which actually do contain some information on Women's Institutes are Jean Bannerman's Leading Ladies: Canada, (1977); Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage, and Anne Wheeler's A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women, (1976); and Catherine Lyle Cleverdon's The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, (1950; reprint edition, 1978). W. L. Morton writes glowingly, if briefly, on the Manitoba Women's Institutes in Manitoba: A History, (1957; reprint edition, 1967). Margaret E. MacLellan's article entitled "History of Women's Rights in Canada" contains a section on Adelaide Hunter Hoodless and the Women's Institutes. The article may be found in a thin volume entitled Cultural Tradition and Political History of Women in Canada, which is edited by members of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, (1971).

Various Women's Institutes have published volumes of their own. Some examples are the Beausejour Women's Institute, Golden Jubilee of Beausejour Women's Institute, History, (1973); the Cayley Women's Institute, Under the Chinook Arch: A History of Cayley and Surrounding Area, (1967); the Munson Women's Institute, Munson and District, (1967); and the Ridgewood Women's Institute, Ridgewood Community: 1889-1967, (1967). As the publication dates indicate, many of these books were published as Centennial projects. They were not intended as scholarly works. A warning should be sounded that these types of publications are often histories of the early members of a community and contain only brief sections on local Women's Institutes. However, the personal histories sometimes reveal that certain individuals belonged to the local Women's Institute, particularly if the individual had been an active member. This can give some indication as to the membership of the local Institute. But this will not always be the case. Often, the accounts will be of a husband and wife, and will concentrate upon the history of the husband.

As the foregoing review of the literature indicates, there is a grave deficiency of material on Women's Institutes. Indeed, there are no coherent accounts of the Women's Institute movement at the international, national, or provincial levels. There are two exceptions, Annie Walker, Edith M. Collins, and M. McIntyre Hood's account of the movement in Ontario, and a thesis completed in 1983 at the University of Victoria entitled "The Women's Institutes in British Columbia, 1909 to 1946: Housewives for 'Home and Country'" by Carol Dennison. This shortcoming leads to difficulties in researching and writing on the topic of Women's Institutes in Alberta. Since it is not possible to rely upon secondary sources, it becomes necessary to resort to other avenues. The sources which have been consulted in researching this thesis include those minute books and records on Women's Institutes in Alberta which are housed at the Provincial Archives. Some government materials on the organization also are available. The other principal source of information has been the correspondence, conversations and interviews, conventions, reports, minute books, and other miscellaneous records received from the various local Women's Institutes in the province.[10]

The basic assumption of this thesis is that the Women's Institutes in Alberta took root and flourished as a social movement. That is, the Institutes grew out of a context of discontent with certain conditions existing in Canadian society and then went through a discernible period of mobilization, involving elements of ideology, leadership, and effective means of communication. Moreover, the careers of Women's Institutes paralleled those of social movements in that the Institutes interacted internally in activities and relationships with the membership and externally in other activities and relationships with communities. The assumption that Women's Institutes in Alberta evolved as a social movement is reflected in the organization of the thesis which is based upon a theoretical framework for social movements.[11] It is not the intention of this thesis, however, to test out any theory of social movements.

Chapter two will deal with the background to the rise of the Women's Institute movement in Alberta within the context of the discontent that was prevalent in Canadian and Albertan society prior to 1909. Chapter three will cover the mobilization of the Albertan movement in terms of its ideology, leadership, and channels of communication. Chapter four will consider the internal operations of Women's Institutes and the ways in which the members themselves benefited from the movement. Chapter five will examine the community activities of the Women's Institutes, what the members did for those outside the movement, and how individuals and communities benefited. Chapter six will form the conclusion of this thesis. A postscript is offered which assesses the Women's Institute movement in the period from 1940 to the present day.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1] Three reasons account for the estimate of total membership being placed as low as two hundred and fifty thousand women. First, it was not unusual for a woman to belong to as many as four or even five different organizations at one time. [Marjory MacMurchy, The Woman--Bless Her: Not as Amiable a Book as it Sounds (Toronto: S. B. Gundy, 1916), pp. 13-14.] Second, the two hundred and fifty thousand estimate included only women belonging to national organizations. It did not account for the number of women belonging to smaller local and provincial organizations such as the women's auxiliaries of the farmers' organizations. Third, the estimate was made when the club movement was still getting underway. While two hundred and fifty thousand was a conservative estimate, it nevertheless represented a sizeable number of women who participated in the club movement.

[2] Veronica Jane Strong-Boag, "The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1924," National Museum of Man Mercury Series, paper no. 18 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976), pp. 11-18.

[3] MacMurchy, The Woman--Bless Her, p. 16.

[4] "Few things are more unhealthy mentally than for a woman whose work is keeping house to remain indoors alone, all day, every day. The need of this middle-aged, married woman for work and social co-operation, her impulse to help others and accomplish something worth doing in the world outside, are the forces which have created women's organisations." (MacMurchy, The Woman--Bless Her, p. 17).

[5] If, for example, a woman was president of a central board, she would then participate on fifteen to twenty committees, attend conferences, be involved in planning and consultations, and ". . . [take] charge regularly of as complicated a business meeting as any business man would care to handle." (MacMurchy, The Woman--Bless Her, p. 20).

[6] Karen J. Blair, The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914, with a Preface by Annette K. Baxter (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Ltd., 1980), p. 60.

[7] "Club life supplies in some degree the place of higher education to those women who have been deprived of the advantages of a college course. What college life is to the young woman, club life is to the woman of riper years, who amidst the responsibilities and cares of homelife still wishes to keep abreast of the times, still longs for the companionship of those who, like herself, do not wish to cease to be students because they have left school." (Ella Dietz Clymer, "The National Value of Women's Clubs," in Transactions of the National Council of Women of the United States, Assembled in Washington, D. C., February 22 to 25, 1891, ed. Rachel Foster Avery (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1891), p. 297).

[8] Clymer, "The National Value of Women's Clubs," p. 299.

[9] For example, the Women's Section of the Constitution for the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association embodied the following 'objects': "To establish libraries, literary societies, reading rooms, arrange lectures and to further extend the knowledge of the members and their families along social and economic lines, with a view of elevating the standard of living in the rural communities," and "To encourage members to provide suitable halls and meeting places and properly equip and furnish same for the social and educational benefits of the members." (Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, Year Book, 1916 (Regina, 1916, pp. 24-6), quoted in Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson, eds., The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 215.

[10] See the Bibliography under Primary Sources for a list of some of the Women's Institutes that I consulted in compiling information for this thesis.

[11] The theoretical framework upon which this thesis is based is that outlined by Samuel D. Clark, J. Paul Grayson, and Linda M. Grayson in the General Introduction to Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Canada (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Limited, 1975), pp. 1-38.

CHAPTER II

THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

The Women's Institute movement in Alberta was part of a larger social phenomenon which encompassed the rise of women's organizations not only in Canada but across North America. More specifically, however, the origins of the Women's Institutes in Alberta may be traced to Eastern Canada where the movement was founded by Mrs. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless. Chapter II will deal with the social, economic, and political climate of Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with particular emphasis upon those elements which spawned the Women's Institute movement both in Eastern Canada and in Alberta. The origins of the Women's Institutes as a movement for rural women will then be considered.

Conditions in Canada at the Turn of the Century

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Canadian society entered a dramatic period of change. A major economic change which characterized Canadian society at this time was industrialization.[1] Concomitant with industrialization was a tremendous increase in the national population; ". . . from under four million at Confederation to five million in 1901 and more than seven in 1911."[2] Industrialization brought wealth, success, and prosperity to many. Those Canadians who were the beneficiaries of economic stimulation were justifiably enthusiastic, perhaps even euphoric, about this trend. Such Canadians went so far as to develop a new business ideology of their own, economic individualism, which was a polite euphemism for "individualistic pecuniary motives."[3] Naturally enough, economic individualism was the precursor to increasingly suspect business practices, and it served as the justification for ignoring the plight of less fortunate Canadians.

Another consequence of industrialization, in addition to economic individualism, was rapid urbanization. Between 1900 and 1910, the urban population increased by sixty-two per cent.[4] This somewhat sudden increase in the numbers of city-dwellers placed a severe strain upon the existing Canadian social institutions. People flocked to the cities from two sources. The first and principal source was foreign immigration from Europe and the United States. Immigrants were arriving in droves. These were not only single men seeking their fortune; families were coming, pauper children were arriving from Britain, and single women were appearing in the hope of finding work as domestic servants. Those immigrants who settled in cities so that they might work in the factories were joined by a second group of people, those who had migrated from the countryside. Even with emigration to the cities, Canada at this time, remained predominantly rural. However, the rural exodus was considerable enough to cause rural supporters some anxious moments. The majority of those who arrived in the cities, whether from foreign lands or the Canadian countryside, joined the ranks of the urban working class.

Immigration, industrialization, and urbanization each contributed to changing the face of Canadian society in the 1890s and early 1900s. In 1896, there were sixteen thousand eight hundred immigrants to Canada; the following year, an additional thirty-two thousand arrived. It was estimated that over two million immigrants came to Canada during the Laurier government's fifteen year tenure. Of this number, approximately thirty-eight per cent were from Britain, thirty-four per cent were from the United States, and the remainder were from Europe.[5] Some idea of just how disheartening it was for the immigrants to adjust to Canada may be gathered from the following:

> I sympathize with immigrants when they arrive in this country at first for a more disappointed man than I was, I think, never landed at Winnipeg. Had [it] not been for the pluck of my good wife I believe I never would have taken my trunks from the station. I would have taken our tickets right back to Glasgow. How thankful I have been that I had a wife who had such pluck. To her I give the credit to this day, for both my success and also that of my sons.
>
> --William Gibson
> Farms and Farmers in Western Canada
> Propaganda booklet, 1904[6]

Yet, the immigrants continued to arrive in Canada. The majority went west, lured by the offer of one hundred and sixty acres of free land. Clifford Sifton, the Minister of the Interior, adopted an extensive advertisement scheme to encourage immigration to Canada. He opened nine Canadian immigration offices in the United States, and he brought American editors and British M.P.s to Canada for tours. Sifton was able to convince many Germans and English to come to Canada, and he was particularly successful in the Ukraine, where between 1887 and 1914, more than two hundred thousand peasants were convinced to seek a new home in Canada. The majority of that number settled in Manitoba and Alberta.[7]

The Laurier era (1896-1911) was a period of optimism and rising expectations. Industrialization, urbanization, and immigration led to changes in the very character of Canadian society. Yet, when put to the test, many social institutions which had previously served the country well, now proved to be inadequate. The instability of these institutions was most evident in Canadian cities, where serious social problems arose. Drinking establishments increased rapidly in number as wage-earners sought places where they could socialize among their peers. The new pressures of competition occasioned feelings of helplessness and inability to cope; consequently, many wage-earners developed problems of alcoholism, infidelity, and violence against wives and families. Other social ills evident in the cities were crime and prostitution. The appearance of industrial slums highlighted the problems associated with poverty, and they stood as testimony to the failure of traditional institutions to provide relief for those in need.[8]

Like the people of eastern Canada, westerners were forced to cope with the ill effects of immigration, urbanization and, to a lesser extent, industrialization. In addition, westerners contended with other overriding sources of discontent. Western Canada's spirit of revolt and political unrest had roots reaching as far back as the Seven Oaks massacre of 1816, the Red River insurrection of 1870, and the Northwest rebellion of 1885.[9] The western agrarian uprisings after 1900 constitute the farmers' movement. The actual causes of the rise of the farmers' movement are many, but in general, it arose out of the numerous grievances held by farm men and women. As producers, the farmers had much to be unhappy about. Grain elevators were privately owned, and were often inadequate in size and inefficiently managed. They also were subject to monopolies, which led to speculation and manipulation of wheat prices; the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, for example, was dominated by five grain companies.[10] Like the grain trade, the meat-packing industry also was controlled by monopolies. The railways were a further cause for grievance by the farmers, for although railways provided a crucial link to the mid-continental region, they operated under non-competitive conditions.[11] The farmers, therefore, were forced to pay exorbitant rates in order to have their produce transported to markets, and often, the railways did not provide a sufficient number of cars.[12] A further point of contention with the farm people lay in their forced dependency on the East. The system of funneling western exports through Winnipeg to the East, served to diminish competition and force the farmers to depend upon middlemen.[13]

The farmers had ample grievances both as producers and as consumers. Costs of purchases of agricultural supplies, farm machinery and implements were higher for Canadian farmers because of Canada's national tariff, which benefited eastern manufacturers by sheltering their prices from competition.[14] The lowering of the tariff was to become a dominant demand of the farmers' movement.

Credit and debt were constant concerns for the farmers. They needed credit in order to purchase farm machinery, land, and livestock; yet the credit extended by the eastern controlled banks was often insufficient. Further, the banks charged high interest rates, which served to force the farmers deep into debt.[15] The farmers of western Canada also were sensitive to rising costs, particularly of land, and here they blamed land monopolies and speculators, such as the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.).[16] The federal government's retention of control of western natural resources for land settlement and railway construction was another grievance.[17]

Of the numerous grievances held by the farmers, the two most severe were the tariff issue and the two-party system. Between 1867 and 1896, the Conservative party had dominated Canadian federal politics. In 1896, the Liberal party, under Wilfrid Laurier, upset the Conservatives and commenced its fifteen years of unbroken rule. Thus, between 1896 and 1911, there emerged in Canada a "full-blown two-party system."[18] Among the western farmers, the suspicion grew that the national parties were concerned with advancing eastern interests.[19] The event which provided the spark for the mobilization of the farmers' movement, or agrarian revolt as it is sometimes called, was the defeat of reciprocity in 1911. The Reciprocity Agreement had offered Canadian farmers free access to the American market. The agreement, however, was defeated along with the Liberal party in 1911.[20] In consequence, the organized farmers became distrustful of the national parties, and the position of both parties was weakened across the West. This weakening of the established political parties made it possible for the farmers' movement to emerge as a political force.

The effects of the farmers' movement were first felt in provincial prairie politics. After the federal defeat of reciprocity, the farmers of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta turned to their provincial governments for solutions to their demands. Three factors have been identified as reasons for the provincial governments being more receptive to the demands of farm people. First, provincial electorates were smaller and more homogeneous than were national electorates, and the farmers, therefore, were able to exert a more direct and effective pressure on the provincial governments than had been possible on the federal government. Second, provincial democracy was simpler and operated more efficiently than did the federal democracy. Third, there was a general reform movement afoot in the Canadian west which sought, among other things, to cleanse provincial politics. The farmers' movement became a part of this general movement.[21] The three provincial governments responded so fully to the demands of the farmers that they became ". . . in all but name and personnel, farmers' governments."[22]

The most radical and influential farmers' organization in the history of the farmers' movement was to be found in Alberta. On 13, 14, and 15 January 1901, an amalgamation convention was held between the Canadian Society of Equity and the Alberta Farmers' Association. Out of this convention was born the United Farmers of Alberta.[23] For approximately the first ten years of its existence as a political entity, the U.F.A. had acted as a pressure group in impressing the interests of farmers upon the Liberal government. Under the leadership of Henry Wise Wood, this organization rose to dominate provincial politics in Alberta for fourteen continuous years, and it became a solid and dominant force in the federal Progressive movement.

Those western grievances that were primarily of a political and an economic nature could be tackled in Alberta by the U.F.A. But there were other factors in the Canadian context which were causes of concern. These were to be found in the rural population and concerned the perceived erosion of the quality of rural life. One indication of this loss of quality was the large numbers of abandoned farm homes. For example, in Ontario in 1913, Lennox and Addington had three hundred and sixty-six fewer rural home dwellings than they had ten years previously; a drop of six point nine per cent.[24] Another indication was the weakened rural household which parents, unable to keep their children on the farm, were left to run alone. A third area of social strain was to be found in the relative numbers of sexes in rural Canada. The proportion of females in rural homes was lessening as numbers of women vented their dissatisfaction with farm life by leaving altogether. A final concern was in the fact that leaders were leaving the country.[25] Whether or not these indications of social strain, outlined in 1913 by John MacDougall, accurately reflected the rural situation is not really the issue. What is significant is the fact that people believed that social strain was evident and, indeed, most of their perceptions were well founded. Urban centers were growing rapidly, and the rural population was depleting. In the ten years leading up to 1913, there was a decline in the proportion of rural to total population in every province:

> . . . in Prince Edward Island from 85 per cent. to 84; in Saskatchewan from 80 to 73 per cent.; in New Brunswick from 76 per cent. to 71; in Manitoba from 72 to 56 per cent.; from 71 per cent. to 62 in Nova Scotia and in Alberta; from 60 to 51 per cent. in Quebec; in Ontario from 57 per cent. to 47; and in British Columbia from 49 to 48 per cent.[26]

A major factor related to rural depopulation was the lack of educational facilities for the young. Those students who wished to pursue an education beyond the public school level were obliged to move to the cities. There they could enter high schools, business colleges, and universities.[27] Graduates of these institutions often did not return to their parents' farms but remained in the cities where career opportunities were ample.

There can be little doubt that the cities provided superior opportunities for education and recreation. Persons employed in the teaching profession in the cities were usually better qualified than their rural counterparts. City teachers were required to have had professional training, and they tended to view teaching as a life long vocation. In contrast, rural teachers were often lacking in professional qualifications, and they taught an average of less than four years before they moved on to other careers.[28] The opportunities for recreation in rural schools could not compare with those in the cities. One reason was that the attendance at rural schools was often too small. In 1910, the Manitoba department of Education issued a report which indicated that two schools in the province operated with an average attendance of less than two children, seven schools had an average of less than three, twelve schools operated with an average of less than four students, twenty schools had less than five, thirty-six schools had less than six pupils, fifty-two schools had under seven, two hundred and eleven had fewer than ten, and two hundred and sixty schools operated with an average attendance of less than twelve children.[29] The ages of the children enrolled in these rural schools varied from five to fourteen. Attendance figures as low as these made it difficult, if not impossible for children to form proper play groups, and there usually was no recreational equipment for them. City schools benefited from high attendance figures and better facilities. Hence a paradox was revealed: "The child of the city streets has so many companions, but no place to play; the country child, with all the world to play in, has so few companions and few games."[30]

It was not only children who could be lonely in the country. Adults, too, had meagre social lives, and this paucity of social opportunities was a significant contributor to rural unrest. Farm life meant isolation from others. The rural situation was alleviated somewhat through the introduction of the rural telephone and rural mail delivery,[31] but this was not enough to eradicate completely the social strain caused by loneliness.

Another area of discontent, particularly among rural women, was in labor conditions on the farms. Labor-saving devices were introduced on farms in the early 1900s but, for the most part, the equipment was that designed for the outdoors. This condition was observed by a popular member of the Women's Institute movement in

Alberta, Mrs. Nellie McClung:

> Many a farmyard, with its binders, rakes, drills rollers, gasoline engine, fanning-mill, and steam-plow looks as if someone had been giving a machinery shower; but in the kitchen you will find the old washboard and dasher churn, which belonged to the same era as the reaping hook and tallow candle. The women still carry the water in a pail from a pump outside, wash the dishes on the kitchen table, and carry the water out again in a pail; although out in the barn the water is pumped by a windmill, or a gasoline engine. The outside work on the farm is done by horse, steam, or gasoline, but the indoor work is all done by woman-power.[32]

It was not necessarily malice which prompted farmers to purchase labor-saving devices for themselves and not for their wives. Rather, farmers may have viewed the labor-saving devices as a means of increasing efficiency and productivity, which would help them to realize larger monetary gains in the marketplace. Nevertheless, the scant provision of labor-saving devices in rural homes was unnecessary in some instances. In the example cited above, Nellie McClung observed that water used in the home had to be pumped outside and carried in in pails. The evidence recorded in an Agricultural survey taken in 1910 would seem to support her claim. It was found that ninety-seven per cent of the farm houses in Prince Edward Island obtained water from wells situated outside the house, in Nova Scotia the number was ninety-eight per cent, in New Brunswick it was ninety-five per cent, and in English-speaking Quebec it was ninety-two per cent.[33] This situation was common in rural Canada, and it made the tasks carried out by farm women more difficult than they need have been.

Everyone involved in the operation of a farm was required to work long hours, but it was the farm wife who labored the most hours in a day:

> A fortnight ago I was a guest over night at a farm home. Though I was downstairs at a quarter past six in the morning breakfast was already over. My hostess apologized, explaining that the men must have breakfast before they began their day's work. "But surely," I said, "that compels you to be at work very early in preparing their meal for them before their work begins." "I am up every morning at half-past four," was her reply. Yet it had been almost eight in the evening when, the day's work being over, we three sat down to the feast of reason, the flow of soul, and the joy of the spirit.[34]

The fifteen and one half to sixteen hour day was typical for the majority of women on Canadian farms. It would be difficult to imagine precisely how exacting such a life would be.[35] Apart from the physical exertion and concomitant exhaustion, farm women would be likely to consider their lives monotonous and uninteresting. Such lives left little room for personal growth, or the realization of dreams and ambitions. Undoubtedly rural women felt a degree of dissatisfaction with the demanding lives that they led.

Paradoxically, while the transformation of Canadian society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced a number of undesirable features which women wished to change, the transformation also produced a number of positive features which, particularly for the middle-class woman, meant a veritable domestic revolution:

> The development of gas lighting, municipal water systems, domestic plumbing, canning, the commercial production of ice, the improvement of furnaces, stoves, and washtubs, and the popularization of the sewing machine aided growing numbers of women to escape from the domestic treadmill.[36]

The new labor-saving devices for the home meant that for the first time in the lives of countless women, there were actually some hours of the day which did not need to be devoted to domestic duties. But it must be stressed that the principal female beneficiaries of the labor-saving devices were middle class women who lived in urban areas. Rural women were still obliged to carry-on in much the same manner as their forebears had done; yet, the evidence does indicate that some transition was taking place. For example, if rural women were able to take advantage of even a few of the new factory produced articles, their workload would be relatively lessened, and they would have some degree of leisure time.

The Women's Institute Movement in Canada

Many issues which women's organizations addressed were in direct response to the discontent which had been generated in Canadian society. Issues which concerned women in organizations included woman suffrage, the conservation of health, unsanitary living conditions, urban renewal, the establishment of social centers, co-operation between people and between countries, the maintenance of peace, and the abolition of alcohol. The women involved were also concerned with the lives of children, particularly in the realms of health and education. They wished to witness the passage of laws for the protection of children, as well as for the protection of women; for example, demands for a just Dower Law were common. In general, women in organizations were concerned with the social welfare of all Canadians, but they were especially concerned with issues that might threaten the home and family.

The response on the part of women to the numbers and variety of issues which were prevalent in Canadian society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to the creation of a diversity of organizations.[37] In 1916, Marjory MacMurchy divided women's organizations into national, occupational, and missionary clubs.[38] Wendy Mitchinson, in 1979, delineated three types of women's clubs: the church and benevolent societies, clubs which provided expressive outlets for women, and clubs which sought to reform the various aspects of society which women viewed as being problematic.[39] Veronica Strong-Boag, in 1976, divided women's organizations into at least eight groups, including fraternal benefit societies, patriotic associations, girls' clubs, professional and alumnae groups, farm alliances, political organizations, religious societies, and French Canadian groups.[40] The various types of classifications which have been devised, whether general or specific, serve as an indication of the numbers and diversity of women's organizations. Undoubtedly, there was an organization to suit the needs of almost every woman who wished to join. One organization which suited the needs of a number of women, particularly those living in rural areas, was the Women's Institutes.

Women's Institutes were a Canadian creation. The first Institute was organized in Ontario on 19 February 1897, in the village of Stoney Creek.[41] It was Mrs. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless who conceived the idea of Women's Institutes, and with the aid and encouragement of Mr. Erland Lee, her idea became a reality. Mrs. Hoodless and Mr. Lee became acquainted in the autumn of 1896, at a meeting of the Experimental Union, held at the Ontario

Agricultural College at Guelph. Mrs. Hoodless gave an address on the need for having domestic science and sewing taught in the public schools.[42] Mrs. Hoodless' belief in the value of this type of education had arisen from a personal experience in her past, in which her eighteen month old son had died as a result of being fed impure milk. In order to prevent similar tragedies in the lives of other young mothers, Mrs. Hoodless determined that they should receive education in domestic science.[43] Hence her speech at the Ontario Agricultural College.

Mrs. Hoodless' views so impressed Mr. Lee that he invited her to speak at a meeting of the Farmers' Institute to be held at Stoney Creek in January 1897. This she consented to do, and in the course of her address at the Farmers' Institute meeting, she suggested that the women form an organization of their own; a female counterpart to the men's organization. Mr. Lee invited her to attend a similar meeting slated for the following Friday evening. During the intervening week, Mr. Lee and his wife travelled to homes throughout the district, endeavoring to persuade women to attend the next meeting.[44]

The meeting took place at the Squire's Hall, Stoney Creek, on 19 February 1897, with one hundred and one women in attendance, and of course, Mr. Lee, who acted as chairperson. During this address, Mrs. Hoodless expanded on her idea of a women's organization, pointing out that if the Farmers' Institute enabled men to grow better crops and produce better livestock, then surely a Women's Institute would enable women to become better homemakers. The women took immediate action by forming the Women's Department of the

Farmers' Institute of South Wentworth. At the next meeting, the name was changed to the Women's Institute of Saltfleet Township, and later, as more Women's Institutes were organized within the township, the name was modified to become the Stoney Creek Women's Institute.[45] Mrs. Hoodless was duly rewarded for her part by being elected honorary president of the Stoney Creek Women's Institute.[46]

The idea of the Women's Institutes was to help members improve their home conditions at the physical, intellectual, and cultural levels. Since it was the members' conviction that "[a] nation cannot rise above the level of its homes . . .,"[47] the object of the first Women's Institute quickly centered upon raising the standard of homemaking.[48] This object was to be fulfilled through six different approaches: domestic economy; architecture; health; floriculture and horticulture; music and art; and literature, education, sociology and legislation.[49] The early programmes of the Stoney Creek Women's Institute meetings indicate ambitious beginnings. Each meeting opened with the members repeating the Lord's Prayer in unison and roll call was taken. Then one or two papers, addresses, discussions, or demonstrations were given on a variety of topics including "The Proper Feeding of Children," "Art," "The Child in Health and Disease," "First Aid to the Injured," "Home Sanitation," and "Homemaking versus Housekeeping."[50] Meetings closed with the National Anthem.[51]

It was Mr. Erland Lee, along with Senator E. D. Smith and Major F. M. Carpenter, who assisted the women in drafting the constitution for the first Women's Institute.[52] Mr. Lee rendered further services by writing both to Mr. J. I. Hodson, Superintendent of Farmers'

Institutes, and to the Hon. John Dryden, Minister of Agriculture, requesting that Women's Institutes be affiliated with Farmers' Institutes, and that these new Institutes receive government assistance and support. His requests on behalf of the Women's Institutes were granted.[53]

In 1899, Miss Laura Rose was sent to the Stoney Creek Women's Institute as the first government speaker and organizer. So began her thirty-five year career in Institute work.[54] It was Miss Rose who organized the second Women's Institute on 29 June 1899 at Whitby, Ontario. On 15 September 1900, a third Women's Institute was organized at Kemble, Ontario.[55] Women who visited Farmers' Institute meetings to encourage the formation of Women's Institutes were Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Lee, Mrs. Carpenter, and Mrs. McNeilly. These four women also wrote articles on Women's Institute work which appeared in the leading agricultural publications.[56] The number of Women's Institutes in the province multiplied rapidly. By 1900, thirty-three Institutes had been formed.[57] This was due largely to the efforts of the early government organizers: Miss Laura Rose, Miss Blanche Maddock, Mrs. A. Kinney, Mrs. J. L. Smith, and Miss A. Hollingsworth.[58] At the suggestion of Mrs. Hoodless, the motto 'For Home and Country' was adopted for all Women's Institutes.[59]

The Women's Institute movement was not long confined to the province of Ontario. Institutes soon began to form in the Maritime Provinces and in Quebec. They also spread rapidly across Western Canada, so that by 1915, a network of Women's Institutes was in place in every Canadian province from coast to coast. Miss Mary MacIsaac, Superintendent of Women's Institutes for Alberta, became convinced that a national organization was desirable, and it was she who took the initial steps in that direction. Thus, with the approval of the Hon. T. A. Crerar, Federal Minister of Agriculture, her wishes became a reality. In February 1919, Women's Institute representatives from every province met in Winnipeg to form the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.[60] Another Albertan, Judge Emily Murphy, was elected the first president, and a constitution was drafted.[61]

Canadian organizers began to spread the word about Women's Institutes outside Canada. Between the years 1909 and 1912, Miss Gertrude A. Gray, an Ontario Women's Institute member, assisted in organizing Women's Institutes for the rural women of the United States, particularly in Delaware, Ohio, and New York State.[62] Women's Institutes also spread to the British Isles. They were first introduced in June 1915 to the Welsh village of Llanfair, on the Isle of Anglesea, by a British Columbia Women's Institute member, Mrs. Alfred Watt.[63] In the same year, Miss Emily Guest, an Ontario Women's Institute member, established the first Institute in Scotland. Once Women's Institutes were introduced to the British Isles, they spread rapidly; before the end of 1918, there were one thousand two hundred Institutes in England alone.[64] Today, the Queen Mother is the national president of Women's Institutes in England.[65]

Organizations similar to Women's Institutes spread throughout the world. In 1898, a year after the founding of the Stoney Creek Women's Institute in Ontario, women in Norway founded the House-mothers' Association. The Norwegian movement gained rapid popularity, spreading to Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. Sir Horace Plunkett became aware of the Women's Institutes in Canada, and in response he helped to found the United Irishwomen in 1910. Mr. de Vuyst, Director of Agriculture in Belgium, returned to his country after a visit to Canada and founded the Circles of Farmers' Wives (Cercles des Fermières) in 1906. This organization spread to France. In Poland, Country-women's Circles were established.[66] Other organizations for rural women were founded in Holland, Germany, Austria, Russia, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Rhodesia, Ceylon, and India.[67] Finally, in 1933, an international organization of rural women was founded in Stockholm, Sweden entitled the Associated Country Women of the World.[68] This organization remains active to this day; in fact, it met in Vancouver in June 1983.[69]

The Women's Institutes in Canada formed an educational movement for rural women. Hence, they were often referred to as the 'rural women's university'. It was through the Institutes that rural women received condensed courses from government teachers in cooking, dressmaking, and home nursing. They also received government bulletins on educational topics.[70] When Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless founded the Institutes, it was her intention that they provide an education for women in the art of home-making. However, the instigator for the educational thrust that the provincial governments developed in their work with Women's Institutes was Miss M. U. Watson, Principal of the Macdonald Institute at Guelph. In 1910, she gave an address at the ninth Annual Convention of the Women's Institutes of Ontario entitled "Education for the Rural Home-maker." In this address, Miss Watson suggested that short term courses be provided to Institute members. To bring about such courses, it was necessary to appoint a committee to assist the Superintendent of Women's Institutes (a government employee), in formulating the educational programme. The committee was duly appointed, with Miss Watson as a member, and it set about to outline a programme of educational short courses. This programme immediately was accepted by the Minister of Agriculture, and a staff of lecturers and teachers was provided. Thus, the Ontario government began offering short courses to Women's Institute members in the winter of 1912 and 1913.[71] The precedent was set, and it was followed in other provinces, including Alberta.

Perhaps the single, most significant factor which contributed to the rise of Women's Institutes was discontent. Rural women were discontented with their sphere, and with good reason; their lives were little more than monotonous routines of back-breaking household labor. The hours were long, the work was difficult, and there was no end in sight. Even though it was fairly obvious that housekeeping was not enough to satisfy a woman, views to the contrary were popular:

> If prejudices belonged to the vegetable world they would be described under the general heading of: 'Hardy Perennials; will grow in any soil, and bloom without ceasing; requiring no cultivation; will do better when left alone.' . . .
>
> Take some of the prejudices regarding women that have been exploded and blown to pieces many, many times and yet walk among us today in the fulness of life and vigor. There is a belief that housekeeping is the only occupation for women; that all women must be housekeepers, whether they

> like it or not. Men may do as they like, and indulge their individuality, but every true and womanly woman must take to the nutmeg grater and the O-Cedar Mop. It is also believed that in the good old days before woman suffrage was discussed, and when woman's clubs were unheard of, that all women adored housework, and simply pined for Monday morning to come to get at the weekly wash . . . .[72]

Such views, regardless of their foolishness, had attained undeserved prominence in Canadian society and hence, had aided in imprisoning rural women in dull and boring lives of drudgery. Why rural women did not take some action to change their lives earlier resided in the fact that "[the] horse on the treadmill may be very discontented, but he is not disposed to tell his troubles, for he cannot stop to talk."[73] Rural women could do little to improve their lives until they had achieved some measure of spare time. Thus, leisure time was an important prerequisite to the formation of Women's Institutes.

Women's Institute meetings provided a pleasant and necessary break in the daily routines of rural women. They helped to overcome the burdens of loneliness and isolation which overshadowed the lives of women who lived on the prairies. Women's Institutes were a response to the human gregarious instinct and provided the opportunity for social contact with peers. Further, Women's Institutes were organized around the concept that rural women did not have a vast amount of spare time to devote to outside activities. The meetings were held only once or twice a month, and members could plan in advance for the event.

Women's Institutes in Canada were a response to the deficiencies which were evident in Canadian society in the 1890s and early 1900s. In this context of Canadian discontent, the most significant deficiencies were the perceived effects of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration; in the context of western discontent, farm men and women were concerned with political and economic conditions; in the context of rural discontent the problems were rooted in the lack of educational, recreational, and social facilities and in the wretched conditions of labor for rural women. Many of the women's organizations which arose in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did so in response to these concerns. What made the Women's Institutes unique was that they were an organization designed specifically for rural women, one which viewed education as a principal means by which to bring about improvement. This was a most appealing concept to the women of Alberta.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1] For example, in 1911 there were 36 per cent more Canadians employed in manufacturing than there had been in 1891. See Samuel D. Clark, J. Paul Grayson, and Linda M. Grayson, eds., Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Canada (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Limited, 1975), p. 40.

[2] Gordon Donaldson, Sixteen Men: The Prime Ministers of Canada (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1980), p. 72.

[3] Clark, Grayson, and Grayson, Prophecy and Protest, p. 41.

[4] Ibid., p. 40.

[5] Donaldson, Sixteen Men, p. 72.

[6] Quoted in Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage, and Anne Wheeler, eds., A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1976), p. 30.

[7] Donaldson, Sixteen Men, p. 72.

[8] E. R. Forbes, "Prohibition and the Social Gospel in Nova Scotia," in Prophecy and Protest, eds. Clark, Grayson, and Grayson, p. 64.

[9] S. D. Clark, Forward to The Progressive Party in Canada, by W. L. Morton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. vii.

[10] Anthony Mardiros, William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie Radical (Toronto: James Lorimar & Company, Publishers, 1979), p. 54.

[11] Morton, Progressive Party in Canada, p. 6.

[12] Mardiros, William Irvine, p. 53.

[13] Morton, Progressive Party in Canada, p. 6.

[14] Ibid., p. 7.

[15] Mardiros, William Irvine, p. 54.

[16] Ibid., p. 53.

[17] Morton, Progressive Party in Canada, p. 8.

[18] Ibid., p. 5.

[19] Ibid., p. 9.

[20] Ibid., p. 24.

[21] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[22] Ibid., p. 31.

[23] David Grant Embree, "Rise of the United Farmers of Alberta," Alberta Historical Review (Autumn, 1957), p. 2.

[24] John MacDougall, Rural Life in Canada, Its Trend and Tasks, with an Introduction by James W. Robertson (Toronto: The Westminster Company, Limited, 1913), p. 37.

[25] Ibid., pp. 38-41.

[26] Ibid., p. 23.

[27] Ibid., p. 138.

[28] Ibid., p. 139.

[29] Ibid., p. 135.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., p. 134.

[32] Nellie McClung, In Times Like These, with an Introduction by Veronica Strong-Boag (U.S.A.: D. Appleton and Company, 1915; reprint

ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 114.

[33] MacDougall, Rural Life in Canada, p. 128.

[34] Ibid., pp. 126-127.

[35] Nellie McClung provided some indication of how exacting it was to be a farm wife as she recalled her friend Jane:

"I remember once attending the funeral of a woman who had been doing the work for a family of six children and three hired men, and she had not even a baby carriage to make her work lighter. When the last baby was three days old, just in threshing time, she died. Suddenly, and without warning, the power went off, and she quit without notice. The bereaved husband was the most astonished man in the world. He had never known Jane to do a thing like that before, and he could not get over it. In threshing time, too! . . . .

"We all gathered at the house that afternoon and paid our respects to the deceased sister, and we were all very sorry for poor Ed. We said it was a terrible way for a poor man to be left . . . .

"Just above the coffin hung an enlarged picture of 'Jane' in her wedding dress, and it was a bright face that looked out at the world from the heavy gold frame, a sweet girlish face, which seemed to ask a question with its eager eyes. And there below, in the black draped coffin, was the answer--the same face, only a few years older, but the power gone off. Jane had been given her answer. And upstairs Jane's baby cried its bitter, insistent cry . . . .

"This happened in the fall of the year, and the next spring, just before the busy time came on, the bereaved husband dried his eyes, painted his buggy, and went out and married one of the neighbor's daughters, a good strong one--and so his house is still running on woman-power." (McClung, In Times Like These, pp. 114-115).

[36] Eleanor Flexnor, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States, Revised Edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 182.

[37] Among the women's organizations formed in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Eastern and Western Division, (1876); The Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, (1881); the Girls' Friendly Society of Canada, (1882); the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, (1883); the Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, (1885); The Woman's Baptist Missionary Union of the Maritime Provinces, (1885); the International Order of King's Daughters and Sons, (1886); the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association, (1889); The Woman's Art Association of

Canada, (1890); the Dominion Order of the King's Daughters, (1891); the National Council of Women of Canada, (1893); the Young Women's Christian Association, (1893); the National Council of Jewish Women, (1894); the National Home Reading Union, (1895); the Women's Institutes, (1897); the Aberdeen Association, (1897); the Victorian Order of Nurses, (1897); the Imperial Order, Daughters of the Empire, (1900); the Canadian Federation of University Women, (1919); the Catholic Women's League, (1920). Yet these clubs represent but a partial list. Among those omitted are local musical clubs, historical societies, literary societies, dramatic, athletic and charitable associations. Two principal sources were consulted in compiling this list: Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson, eds., The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 199, and Wendy Mitchinson, "'For God, Home and Native Land': A Study in Nineteenth-Century Feminism," in A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), p. 225.

[38] Marjory MacMurchy, The Woman--Bless Her: Not as Amiable a Book as it Sounds (Toronto: S. B. Gundy, 1916), pp. 11-12.

[39] Mitchinson, "'For God, Home and Native Land'," p. 152.

[40] Veronica Jane Strong-Boag, "The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1924," National Museum of Man Mercury Series, paper no. 18 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976), p. 94.

[41] Annie Walker, Edith M. Collins, and M. McIntyre Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement: In Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Women's Institutes of Ontario (Toronto: Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, 1948), p. 1.

[42] Ibid., p. 2.

[43] Ibid., p. 3.

[44] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[45] Ibid., p. 4.

[46] Ibid., p. 6.

[47] From the first minute book of the Stoney Creek Women's Institute, quoted in Walker, Collins, and Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 4.

[48] "In the rules and regulations governing Farmers' Institutes, as reported by the superintendent, J. I. Hodson for the year 1898-1899, there appear the following paragraphs concerning the formation of Women's Institutes.

"The formation of Women's Institutes shall be permitted, one for each district as given in Schedule 'A' of the 'Act and Rules governing Farmers' Institutes'.

"The object of Women's Institutes shall be the dissemination of knowledge relating to domestic economy, including household architecture, with special attention to home sanitation, a better understanding of the economic and hygenic value of foods, clothing and fuel, and a more scientific care and training of children with a view to raising the general standard of the health and morals of our people." (Walker, Collins, and Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 10).

[49] From the first minute book of the Stoney Creek Women's Institute, quoted in Walker, Collins, and Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 6.

[50] Walker, Collins, and Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 7.

[51] Ruth Howes, "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, 1857-1910," in The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and Their Times, ed. Mary Quayle Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), pp. 114-115.

[52] Walker, Collins, and Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 6.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., p. 7.

[55] Ibid., p. 11.

[56] Ibid., p. 9.

[57] The following table illustrates the growth of Women's Institutes in Ontario by five year periods:

YEAR	BRANCHES	MEMBERSHIP
1900	33	1,602
1905	208	7,018
1910	612	16,104
1915	892	29,045
1920	925	28,970

1925	1,001	34,259
1930	1,150	40,000
1935	1,371	42,000
1940	1,391	40,300
1945	1,213	32,000
1947	over 1,300	over 37,000

Walker, Collins, and Hood, *Fifty Years of Achievement*, p. 30.

[58] Ibid., p. 12.

[59] Howes, "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless," p. 115.

[60] Mrs. Cameron Dow, of Gaspe, Quebec, Past President of the F.W.I.C., quoted in Walker, Collins, and Hood, *Fifty Years of Achievement*, p. 43.

[61] "The aims and objects of the national federation are legion, but in a concise form they are as follows;

"1. To co-ordinate the Provincial units through a system of conveners, national, provincial and local. 2. To raise the standard of homemaking. 3. To act as a clearing house for the activities of the provincial organizations. 4. To develop agriculture to meet the food needs of the race. 5. To promote educational, moral, social and economic measures in accordance with the objects of the Federation. 6. To encourage co-operation in community efforts. 7. To initiate nationwide campaigns in accordance with the objects of the Federation." (Mrs. Cameron Dow, of Gaspe, Quebec, Past President of the F.W.I.C., quoted in Walker, Collins, and Hood, *Fifty Years of Achievement*, pp. 43-44).

[62] Walker, Collins, and Hood, *Fifty Years of Achievement*, p. 45.

[63] John William Robertson Scott, *The Story of the Women's Institute Movement in England & Wales & Scotland* (Idbury: The Village Press, 1925), p. 202.

[64] Walker, Collins, and Hood, *Fifty Years of Achievement*, p. 48.

[65] Jean Bannerman, *Leading Ladies: Canada* (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing Company, 1977), p. 187.

[66] Robertson Scott, *The Story of the Women's Institute Movement*, pp. 15-16.

[67] Walker, Collins, and Hood, *Fifty Years of Achievement*, p. 50.

[68] Howes, "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless," p. 115.

[69] First learned in conversation with Mrs. Thorne of the Fort Saskatchewan Women's Institute, 12 January 1983.

[70] Howes, "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless," p. 115.

[71] Walker, Collins, and Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, pp. 65-67.

[72] McClung, In Times Like These, p. 44.

[73] Ibid., p. 45.

CHAPTER III

MOBILIZATION

The Women's Institute movement was introduced to Alberta early in 1909. Within a few years it had achieved government backing, created a provincial organization, and significantly changed the lives of hundreds of rural women. By 1920 it had become a major educational, social, and cultural force in the province. The reasons for the success of the movement, like those of any successful movement in history, were complex. It is possible, however, to isolate a number of necessary conditions for the success of the movement. These include a widely shared view of the function of the W.I. movement, that is, a common ideology, a strong and able leadership, and a readily available network of various forms of communication.[1] The chapter will first detail an account of the W.I. movement in Alberta up to 1920, when the movement may be said to be firmly mobilized. It will conclude with an examination of the major factors which contributed to the movement's success.

The Lea Park Women's Institute, organized on 3 February 1909, was the first Women's Institute (W.I.) in Alberta. This W.I. had been the idea of Mrs. M. E. Graham and Mrs. John Johnston. The two friends had met in 1908, when Mrs. Graham and her husband moved to a homestead north of Vermilion. Both women had been members of Women's Institutes in Ontario. Mrs. Graham had been secretary of the Ailsa

Craig Women's Institute, and president of the North Middlesex District Women's Institute. Mrs. Johnston had been a member of the Slate River Women's Institute. In preparation for the organization of the first Albertan W.I., Mrs. Graham wrote a letter dated 18 January 1909, to the Department of Agriculture. She requested that a Department representative be sent to the organizational meeting of the Women's Institute which was called for 3 February 1909, and to which all the women of the district had been invited. Mrs. Graham's letter was answered by Mr. C. E. Lewis, Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes. He regretted his inability to send a representative as requested, but he expressed his hope that the Department of Agriculture would be in a position to establish a Women's Institute Branch in the near future.[2]

The handwritten minutes of the Lea Park Women's Institute, recorded rather inauspiciously in a five cent Eaton's Exercise Book, indicate that the first meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Johnston. The meeting opened with the customary introductions, and then the women assembled for a photograph, taken by Mr. Barns. Hazel Johnston gave an "appropriate" recitation, which was followed by Mrs. Graham who gave an address on the topic of Women's Institutes. This was "listened to with much attention."[3] The following persons were then elected by acclamation to offices: President, Mrs. M. E. Graham, Lea Park; First Vice-President, Mrs. J. C. Dale, Tring; Second Vice-President, Mrs. Grey, Dewberry; Secretary, Miss Anna McKenzie Hall, Lea Park; Treasurer, Mrs. John Johnston, Lea Park. Directors were Mrs. J. Donaldson of Tring, Mrs. C. W. Harrington of Tring, Miss M.

Humfrey of Tring, Mrs. Minard of Dewberry, and Mrs. Walker of Dewberry. The programme committee was comprised of the following women: Mrs. Graham, Mrs. J. C. Dale, Mrs. Grey, Miss Anna McKenzie Hall, and Mrs. Johnston. Auditors were Mrs. W. R. George and Miss B. McDougall.[4]

At the second meeting of the Lea Park Women's Institute, held in March, a motion was passed which set the membership fee at twenty-five cents for one member in each family, and ten cents for each additional member.[5] In total, the Lea Park Women's Institute had thirty-eight members in 1909, twenty-four of whom were married, and twelve of whom were single. The remaining two, J. Shaw and J. B. Goodall, were men.[6]

Crucial to the spread and eventual success of the movement was provincial government involvement. As indicated above, Mr. C. E. Lewis, Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes, was considering the possibility of forming a Women's Institute Branch under the Department of Agriculture. Mrs. Graham determined that this possibility would not be forgotten. Between 1909 and 1912, she made repeated appeals to the Department of Agriculture requesting that a systematic organization of Women's Institutes be introduced, that such Institutes be given financial assistance in the form of grants, and that the government make pertinent literature on the topics of the home, garden, and farm available to the Institutes.[7] Mrs. Graham's involvement with Women's Institutes in Ontario had made her aware, as no doubt the Alberta provincial government was aware, that a precedent had been set. The Ontario government provided grants to

Women's Institutes, and so it was fitting that the Alberta government should do the same.

The provincial government had already become aware, albeit gradually, that there was a general desire among rural women in Alberta to extend their knowledge. As early as 1907, the Department of Agriculture began offering short courses to farmers, free of charge. The courses were held at various centers throughout the province; three or four courses were offered consecutively, for a total duration of approximately two weeks. What was discovered was that a number of women accompanied their husbands to these courses. The women were particularly interested in the lectures on poultry and dairying. Eventually, the Department of Agriculture added a short course in domestic science; the response on the part of rural women was overwhelming. The government, therefore, determined to take further action. On 1 December 1912, Mr. C. E. Lewis, Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes, prepared a circular entitled "Inception of Women's Institute Work in Alberta." In this circular, Mr. Lewis drew attention to the enthusiasm shown by rural women toward the addition of the short course on domestic science. He concluded that this enthusiasm seemed to "indicate that the time was ripe for a permanent provision to assist women's work on the farms and in the homes."[8] Thus, in 1912, the provincial Department of Agriculture became involved in Women's Institute work.

One of the first considerations of the Department of Agriculture was the organization of new Women's Institutes. An effective mechanism by which the Department sought to attain this end was through the use of Demonstration Trains. These special trains had begun travelling throughout the province as early as 1909, providing lectures to farmers. Miss Nora Trench and Miss Roberta McAdam had travelled on the trains as lecturers on foods and cookery. In 1912-1913, the Demonstration Trains adopted the additional function of Institute work. During that winter, the 'Mixed Farming Special' included lectures by Miss McAdam and Miss Georgina Stiven on Women's Institutes; a number of branches were organized in this way.[9]

Provision was made in the Legislature for an annual government grant to local Women's Institutes of five dollars. A W.I. was eligible for the grant if it had a minimum of twenty paid-up members, and if it had sent reports of at least three meetings to the Department of Agriculture.[10] However, since it was nearly impossible for some W.I.s to achieve a membership of twenty, the number required for the grant was reduced to fifteen members.[11] Mrs. Graham, first president of the Lea Park Women's Institute, wrote to the Department of Agriculture and indicated that she felt the grant was too small. She received a letter of reply from Miss Georgina Stiven, Superintendent of Women's Institutes, which stated in part that, "The grant $5.00 seems small, Mrs. Graham, but I would say that Ontario (our banner province in Institute work) only gives $3.00."[12] The W.I.s which qualified to receive the grant in the first year, 1912, were Cardston (thirty-seven members), Lea Park (thirty-eight members), Magrath (twenty-seven members), Pincher Creek (thirty members), Raymond (forty-five members), and Verdant Valley (twenty members). Those W.I.s which were organized too late to receive the grant were Walsh, Taber, and Crossfield.[13]

In 1912, the Department of Agriculture began a number of services designed for the Women's Institutes in addition to the five dollar grant. Hard cover minute books were supplied to each W.I., and the Department regularly sent out programmes of suggested topics to aid the Institutes in organizing their meetings.[14] Women's Institute Handbooks were drafted in 1912, but they were not actually printed and distributed until 1915.[15] The Department also made literature available to individual members of Institutes. The intention of this service was outlined by Miss Stiven, Superintendent of Women's Institutes, in a letter to Mrs. Graham, first president of the Lea Park Women's Institute: "For instance, if a lady in your Institute is giving a paper on a certain subject, if she writes to this Department, if at all possible, Mr. Lewis [Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes] sends some literature on that subject. Perhaps it is only a clipping from a paper or magazine but sometimes it gives a few suggestions."[16] Demonstrators were employed by the Department to visit local W.I.s, and it was hoped that circulating libraries, to be operated in conjunction with the Department of Education, would be sent out to the Women's Institutes in the near future.[17] What seems to be clear is that once the government became committed to involving itself in the Women's Institute movement, that involvement became fairly intensive.

The Lea Park Women's Institute, the first W.I. to organize in Alberta, was in existence for only five years. This W.I. had always enjoyed a close association with the Tring and Greenlawn branch of the United Farmers of Alberta (U.F.A.). As early as 7 April 1909, which was the date of but the third meeting of the Lea Park W.I., there appeared in the minutes a reference to the Tring and Greenlawn U.F.A. in conjunction with the organization of two Union Picnics, to be held on 24 May and 1 July 1909.[18] At the Lea Park W.I. meeting of 13 January 1910, "[there] was some discussion as to the advisability of holding meetings at the same hour but in a different room as the U.F.A. of Tring and it was decided that we should give the plan a trial."[19] The close association between the Lea Park W.I. and the Tring U.F.A. was to continue to 1914 when, in the early part of that year, the Lea Park W.I. merged with that branch of the U.F.A.[20]

A year after the loss of the original Women's Institute, the provincial organization was formed. The idea for a provincial organization was actually sparked by events within another women's club, the United Farm Women of Alberta (U.F.W.A.). In January 1915, each of the local Women's Institutes in Alberta received invitations to send delegates to a convention of the U.F.A., to be held in Edmonton. Upon arriving at the convention, the W.I. delegates discovered that the planned intention was to both draft a constitution for the U.F.W.A., and to elect a Provincial Board for that new organization. There was a sentiment amongst some of the delegates present that Alberta was too young a province to support two rural women's organizations, (at this time, Alberta had been a province for ten years only). These delegates, therefore, requested that the U.F.W.A. constitution be made broad enough to include both farm women and women living in hamlets, villages, and small towns; the intention was to form one strong organization. This suggestion precipitated much discussion which culminated, eventually, in the adoption of a resolution. The resolution required a woman to be the wife or the daughter of a farmer in order to belong to the organization to be known as the U.F.W.A. The adoption of this resolution meant that those delegates at the convention who were from small towns, villages, and hamlets could not become members of the new organization. A number of the delegates who found themselves in this predicament decided, therefore, to depart from the convention.[21]

Among those women who had left the U.F.W.A. convention early was Mrs. D. R. McIvor of Cowley. Mrs. McIvor had been a charter member of the Lion's Head W.I. in Ontario prior to moving west in 1906, and she was to occupy a number of important offices in the Alberta Women's Institute. Mrs. McIvor and two other women obtained an interview with the Hon. Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture, and requested that a Women's Institute convention be arranged. Since a Seeds and Fairs convention was already scheduled to be held at Olds in March, it was agreed that Olds also would be a suitable setting for a W.I. convention.[22] Miss Georgina Stiven had resigned as Superintendent of Women's Institutes in 1914; she was succeeded by Miss Mary MacIsaac, a graduate of the Toronto General Hospital. It was Miss MacIsaac who was responsible for planning the W.I. convention, and she set about this task with much enthusiasm. The forty-two W.I.s then in existence in Alberta each received an invitation to the convention, and an attractive programme was

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arranged.[23]

Approximately one hundred representatives from the branch organizations attended the first provincial W.I. convention. The event was recorded in the Alberta Women's Institute minute book:

> Events that are far reaching may receive but little notice when they occur. On Feby 17, 18, 19, 1915, the first Annual Convention of the Women's Institutes of Alberta took place at Olds in the Main building of the School of Agriculture and we have reason to mark the date as the beginning of a wide movement for better living conditions throughout the Province of Alberta.[24]

This first W.I. convention, then, marked the formation of the Alberta Women's Institute, a provincial organization which linked the local W.I.s together into a solid force of rural women. The programme of the original convention was designed to touch upon every phase of a woman's life. Speakers were the Hon. Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture, Miss MacIsaac, Superintendent of Women's Institutes, Mrs. Hill, a school trustee from Edmonton, Miss Hayward of the Claresholm School of Agriculture, Miss Goldie of the Olds School of Agriculture, Mrs. Nellie McClung, and many others.[25] Miss Isobel Noble of Daysland, a university graduate, was elected president of the provincial organization. She proved to be an excellent president and was re-elected by acclamation to that office seven years successively.[26]

The specific circumstances which led to the formation of local Women's Institutes in Alberta varied. When Miss Georgina Stiven arrived in Munson on 27 November 1912 on the government Demonstration Train, the women of the district travelled from a radius of five miles to hear her lecture on Women's Institutes; they then formed a branch of their own.[27] Prior to this, a similar event had occurred in Walsh:

> To those who lived here many years ago when practically all the pleasure and enjoyment which fell to a [woman's] lot was found in her own home--the Women's Institute came as a source of very welcome and quite unexpected pleasure.
>
> When we say unexpected, we mean this--When a number of the women gathered at a Demonstration Train on October 31st, 1912, they did not know what there was in store for them . . . .
>
> When they commenced their tour through the train they met a couple of ladies, one of them a Miss [Stiven]; who asked them if they would return to them for a few minutes after they had been through the train.
>
> Thinking they were going to be treated to an address on Domestic Science they went on their way.
>
> When they finally returned Miss [Stiven] told them of the Women's Institute and gave a splendid address on the work and aims of the organization. She asked if they would not like to have a branch of the Women's Institute established in Walsh. They all felt that it would be something which would be of benefit to them in many ways, especially helping them to get better acquainted with each other and perhaps giving them a little insight into the happenings of other lives.[28]

A partial organizational meeting was held right then and there on the Demonstration Train. The following month, on 16 November 1912, the organizational meeting was completed with the election of officers and the payment of dues of twenty-five cents per member. The new fifteen member organization selected the name of Walsh Women's Institute.[29]

The Munson and Walsh W.I.s were examples of locals organized by the office of the Superintendent of Women's Institutes. After 1915, the A.W.I. joined in organizing locals. The Independence W.I. of the Morinville area was organized by Mrs. A. H. Rogers, who was then Secretary-Treasurer of the A.W.I.[30] She also organized the Kinniburgh W.I. which encompassed the district between Taber and Grassey Lake. A number of local Women's Institutes grew out of other women's organizations. Kinniburgh was such a branch. In 1915, the women of the area had organized the Home Circle as a social and community club. Mrs. Rogers arrived in July 1918, and the group decided to disband and then reorganize as a branch of the Women's Institutes.[31] Similarly, the Burdett W.I. grew out of the Returned Soldiers' Aid Society of the First World War.[32] The women who formed the Gordon W.I. first did so because they were interested in having a sewing club. They selected the Women's Institute organization due primarily to the efforts of Mrs. L. Riste. An enthusiastic and hard working member of the Cottonwood W.I., Mrs. Riste invited the women of the Gordon District to a meeting. The Gordon ladies were impressed so favorably that they formed their own W.I.[33]

There were a number of small local Women's Institutes in Alberta that existed for only a short while. Unfortunately, there is little information to be had on a number of these branches. For example, a W.I. branch existed for some time in Fort McMurray, but all that is known about it is that ". . . distance and isolation must have proved too much for it, for it has disbanded."[34] A similar paucity of information might have existed on the original Springvale W.I. had it not been for the fact that a former member, "now long gone," left a brief outline of that branch's activities with the modern Springvale W.I. branch. The original W.I. was located on the eastern outskirts of Red Deer in the Springvale district. Mrs. Lyle Brown, who was Constituency Convener at the time, ". . . drove 20 miles in 40 below zero weather to officiate at the meeting, and to organize the branch."[35] Although there was not a great deal of information on some Women's Institutes, and even no information at all on a few others, we can be fairly certain that these more obscure Women's Institutes pursued interests that were similar to those pursued by all Women's Institutes in Alberta. A member of the Aldersyde W.I. stated it most succinctly when she wrote: "Our motto has been 'For Home and Country' but we are interested in the welfare of people, especially children and women everywhere."[36]

By 1920, the Women's Institutes in Alberta had fully mobilized. The movement had attracted a substantial portion of the female rural population, and to that extent it was rendered a viable force. Further, the movement had not only weathered a major war with success, but had emerged to help organize and provide the leadership for a national organization, the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. It was on such a note of optimism that the W.I.s prepared to move into the decade of the 1920s.

Ideology of the Women's Institutes in Alberta

The importance of a shared ideology for the success of any social movement is crucial, and certainly the W.I. movement in Alberta possessed a strong ideological component. An ideology provides a common system of beliefs to which members can adhere. It usually is formulated through a combination of imported and indigenous notions and often, will evolve through the course of the movement. An ideology not only provides a common perception of discontent by identifying what is wrong, who is responsible, and who are the victims; it also provides a remedy for this deficiency. A palatable ideology thus ensures the firm commitment of members to a movement.[37]

In a general sense, the ideology of the Women's Institutes encompassed a particular brand of feminism which pervaded all Canadian women's organizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The term employed by historians to refer to this type of feminism is 'maternal' or 'domestic feminism'. Since the one completely acceptable sphere of female responsibility during that time was the care of home and family, women were able to justify their forays beyond the home only in terms of an extension of their domestic or maternal responsibilities.[38] Thus, the areas in which women involved themselves outside the home were the traditional areas of female concern,[39] which had simply been transferred from the microcosm of the home to the macrocosm of society at large. Women were clearly justified in concerning themselves with social welfare, or with the education of children, since these had always been areas of female responsibility, albeit on the smaller scale of the home. In addition to this kind of maternal responsibility, domestic feminism embodied the concept of female moral superiority.[40] This combination helped women to rationalize their wishes to step outside the home. Women's organizations became an acceptable way in which women could assert themselves in relationship to men. The attitude of female superiority is illustrated in the following comment by Nellie McClung, who was an active participant in the Women's Institute movement:[41]

> Women have carried many a sore thought in their hearts, feeling that they have been harshly dealt with by their men folk, and have laid the blame on the individual man, when in reality the individual has not been to blame. The whole race is suffering from masculinity; and men and women are alike to blame for tolerating it.[42]

Women's excursions outside the home were made even more palatable by the belief that they were performed for entirely altruistic purposes.

The concept of maternal feminism is basic to the ideologies of most late nineteenth and early twentieth century women's organizations. For example, the National Council of Women of Canada, (N.C.W.C.) was an organization that stressed the maternal nature of women which was to overshadow those dissimilar traits which Council members might have possessed in terms of class, religion, or ethnicity. Women's maternal nature, or the 'mothering' ideal, became the cohesive force within the movement. It was used as the justification for women's intervention outside the traditional sphere of the home. Members believed that society was in need of women's special talents of 'mothering'.[43] Similarly, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, (W.C.T.U.) restricted its activities to areas which coincided with women's maternal responsibilities, particularly women and children. The W.C.T.U., therefore, worked for changes in the fields of nursing, education, social welfare, and child care.[44]

Women's organizations represented a popular strategy on the part of females for achieving some measure of release from home life.[45] However, Canadian society in the early twentieth century would not tolerate a mass exodus of women away from the responsibilities of the housewife. Indeed, the occupation of housewife was central to its functioning:

> The family, with its unpaid housewife, was and still is an essential institution which privatizes the many costs incidental to sustaining present and future generations of workers. Subjecting the function of unpaid household labour to liberal standards of market rationality, self-interest and autonomy would challenge its very fundamentals. Liberalism has therefore always suffered a blind spot in its inability to apply its ostensibly 'universal'

> values to women. Instead, feudal notions of inherited station and obligation have prevailed.[46]

Of course, the "feudal notion" of obligation was the stuff that maternal feminism was made of. What clubwomen did was highlight the obligations of women to the family, and then extend these obligations to society.[47] The notion of maternal feminism legitimized women leaving the home for short periods, and in that sense it brought freedom to women. But it was a limited sort of freedom because, even though women's social responsibilities were extended into society, those responsibilities were still interpreted as being of a maternal or domestic nature. The tie to the home was still present; it had not been broken, and perhaps, clubwomen did not want it to be broken.[48]

Maternal feminism must be viewed as the ideological thread which linked all Canadian women's organizations together, including the Women's Institutes, but it did not form the entire ideology of each club. Each women's organization had a specific system of ideas which comprised its own particular ideology. In the case of the Women's Institutes, the key words which exemplified their ideology were contained in their motto: 'For Home and Country'. This motto was formulated by the founder, Mrs. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, and it was she who provided the most often-quoted statement of the ideology of the Women's Institutes. In her words: "A nation cannot rise above the level of its homes, therefore, we women must work and study together to raise our homes to the highest possible level.[49] This ideology was the basis of the W.I. movement in Ontario. It is significant that the W.I.s viewed the home as the bulwark of the nation, since this was the traditional realm of women. The Women's Institutes, through their ideology, were able to lend a new sense of importance to rural women's primary occupation as homemakers. This would have been reassuring to potential members of Women's Institutes since the home was an area with which they were familiar. Thus, the ideology of the Women's Institutes would have appealed to rural women as an attractive affirmation of their role in society.

The idea of raising the standard of homemaking opened a number of areas which Women's Institutes in Ontario could and did pursue. They sought to promote a greater knowledge among members in the realm of household science, which encompassed such topics as household architecture, sanitation, health, medicine, nutrition, and domestic economy. Institute members also were interested in floriculture, horticulture, music, art, and literature. The aim of the Women's Institutes, generally, was to educate their members in ways of improving the home, in caring for and raising children, and in becoming better homemakers themselves.

Lea Park, the first Women's Institute in Alberta, was instigated by Mrs. Graham and Mrs. Johnston, both of whom had been a part of the Women's Institute movement in Ontario. It can be surmised, therefore, that the ideology upon which they based the Lea Park W.I. was transported from Ontario. At the first meeting of the Lea Park W.I., on 3 February 1909, Mrs. Graham gave an address on the topic of Women's Institutes. It would be reasonable to assume that her information was based upon her experience in Ontario. Further, the topics pursued at the early meetings, which were vegetable gardening, flower gardening, poultry raising, foundations of health, and emergencies,[50] were in keeping with the areas covered by the Ontario W.I.s. In fact, at the third meeting, an extract was read from an Ontario W.I. report.[51] The Alberta movement also adopted the same motto as its Ontario counterpart: 'For Home and Country'.

When the Alberta government determined to become involved in the Women's Institute movement, one of its first tasks was to provide a statement of the goals of the W.I.s. In a circular of 1 December 1912 announcing the inception of Women's Institutes in Alberta, Mr. C. E. Lewis, Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes, wrote:

> . . . it is now proposed to organize a system of women's clubs or institutes under government patronage, having as their object the simplifying of all problems pertaining to the home, and consequent achievement of better home conditions and the increase of the general fund of comfort, health, and efficiency. The study of Home Economics, including as it does household architecture, sanitation and hygiene, scientific nutrition, the care and training of children and the knowledge of values (relative and absolute) of household materials will come in for a large share of attention. Mutual helpfulness will be urged and social intercourse, which affects the development of an important side of human nature, will be encouraged. In brief, a conscious effort will be made to promote the highest ideals of home and the best standards of community life.[52]

It was evident that the government intended Women's Institutes in Alberta to work in areas similar to those of the Ontario Women's Institutes. Both W.I. movements were concerned with household architecture, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition, and the care and training of children. This was in keeping with the wishes of the founder of the W.I. movement, Mrs. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, that women receive domestic science instruction in order that they become better homemakers and mothers. The Alberta government also urged that rural women involve themselves in mutual helpfulness; this was an important concept at a time when the evolution of an infrastructure of social services was still in its nacent stages of development. In the absence of government agencies to provide social or economic aid, women of the W.I. movement were encouraged to rely upon one another. The Alberta government demonstrated a cognizance with the opportunities that the Women's Institutes would provide for social interaction, and with the significance of social interaction in the development of human nature. The Women's Institutes, therefore, were intended as a method of overcoming one of the most pressing deficiencies in the lives of rural women, which was loneliness and isolation.

Ideologies of social movements may be comprised of a combination of imported and indigenous notions. This was the case with the ideology of the Alberta Women's Institutes. It was comprised of the ideology of the Ontario W.I. movement as it was imported to Alberta, and it was comprised of ideas which were indigenous to Alberta. The principal deficiency as perceived by the Women's Institutes in Alberta was to be found in inadequate social conditions, particularly, although not exclusively, in rural communities. The aim of the Alberta W.I.s was to improve upon these social conditions. An ideology may evolve over the course of a social movement. The Women's Institute Act, as amended in 1919, illustrates the extent to which the ideology of the Alberta W.I.s had evolved. The objects of the Women's Institutes, as outlined in this Act, were as follows:

OBJECTS OF THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

> 3. The objects of the women's institute shall be the improvement of social conditions in rural and other

> communities by means of--
>
> 1. The study of home economics (including home nursing, household science, sanitation, food values, sick-room cookery, house furnishing, sewing, and other matters), child welfare, prevention of disease, local neighborhood needs, industrial and social conditions;
>
> 2. Establishing the women's institute as a social and educational centre in the community and by utilizing it as a means of welcoming new settlers;
>
> 3. The encouragement of agriculture and improvement of agricultural conditions;
>
> 4. The holding, establishment and maintaining of demonstrations, lectures, short course schools, travelling and other libraries, exhibitions, competitions, meetings, conventions and such other utilities and attractions as may from time to time be deemed useful for the promotion of the foregoing objects or any of them.[53]

It was evident that, over the course of time, the ideology of the Women's Institutes in Alberta became a more distinct system of ideas. The W.I.s intended to improve home conditions by educating their members in home economics, they intended to improve social conditions by establishing the W.I.s as centers for social and educational activities, and they intended to do their part in improving economic conditions through the study of agriculture. Further, the methods by which the W.I.s sought to attain these ends had become diversified and extensive. It will be noticed, however, that each of the methods outlined was of an educational nature. In fact, through the pursuance of their ideology, the W.I.s became an educational movement for farm women; for this reason, they were referred to as the rural women's university.

Leadership of Women's Institutes

Leadership is another extremely important element in the mobilization of any social movement.[54] Fortunately, Alberta possessed a number of energetic women who were able to grasp the context of discontent in Canadian society. It was these women who enhanced and articulated the ideology of the movement and it was they who organized the activities of the members. The following biographies of the leaders of the Women's Institute movement deal almost exclusively with Albertan women. Adelaide Hoodless, the founder of the movement, is the sole exception.

Mrs. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless

Adelaide Hoodless (1857-1910), was a most significant leader of the Women's Institute movement. By the time she founded the Stoney Creek Women's Institute in 1897, she already was an experienced clubwoman. In the autumn of 1889, a Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) was organized in Hamilton. By 1891, Adelaide Hoodless had been elected its president, a position which she held for fourteen years. When the national Y.W.C.A. was organized in 1893, she was elected first vice-president. In 1895, she became the second president of the national Y.W.C.A.; this position she held for two years.[55] Another club which she helped to found was the Victorian Order of Nurses (V.O.N.). Mrs. Hoodless also was the first treasurer of the National Council of Women of Canada, founded in 1893, and she served for ten years as treasurer and convener of home economics in the Hamilton Local Council of Women.[56]

On 15 September 1881, Adelaide married John Hoodless. He was a native of Hamilton and at the age of twenty became a partner in his father's successful business as a Hamilton furniture manufacturer and dealer. Adelaide and John had four children: Edna Clarkson, (b. 7 July 1882), Joseph Bernard, (b. 10 December 1884), Muriel

Adelaide, (b. 27 July 1886), and John Harold, (b. 23 January 1888). At the age of eighteen months, John Harold died. His death, Mrs. Hoodless learned, had been caused by impure milk which had been delivered to her home.[57] Shortly after this incident, Adelaide Hoodless determined that she would do what she could to help others avoid the senseless deaths of their children. The method she chose was education, particularly as it related to girls and women.

Adelaide Hoodless was willing to expend enormous personal effort in order to popularize domestic science instruction. In April 1894, at the first annual meeting of the National Council of Women, she presented a resolution which called for the National Council's involvement in furthering the introduction of domestic science training for girls into the public school systems of Canada. The National Council set up a Standing Committee on Household Science in 1901, and Mrs. Hoodless became its convener.[58] At the suggestion of the Hon. G. W. Ross, Minister of Education for Ontario, she instituted a series of addresses on the topic of domestic science instruction which she presented to educators. She gave some sixty such addresses to school boards and teachers' conventions between the years 1894 and 1896. In this way she was both directly and indirectly responsible for the introduction of domestic science courses in the educational institutions of Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, and British Columbia. Further, it was through her efforts that the Ontario Legislature made domestic science and manual training (which was the type of education that she recommended for boys) permitted subjects in the public schools. The Ontario Legislature also gave grants to those school boards that indicated a desire to introduce these subjects into their curricula. Domestic science and manual training courses were introduced in some thirty-two centers in Ontario between the years 1893 and 1908.[59] In this way, Adelaide Hoodless was able to reach young Canadian girls, and ingrain in them the responsibilities of homemaking and motherhood. She reached Canadian women through her work in women's organizations, and she reached rural women in particular through founding the Women's Institute movement in Canada.

If domestic science was to be properly taught in the schools, it was necessary that teachers first receive a firm grounding in the subject. It was to this end that Adelaide Hoodless, with the co-operation of Miss Urie Watson, founded the School of Art and Domestic Science in Hamilton, Ontario.[60] The school was financed primarily through the contributions of Lord Strathcona, but the Ontario government did supply a modest grant. In 1902, this school became affiliated with the Ontario Normal College at Hamilton, and thus, it became directly involved in the training of teachers for public and high schools. Schools of domestic science were established also in Truro, Nova Scotia, Halifax, Montreal, and Ottawa.[61] As the demand for domestic science teachers continued to grow, Mrs. Hoodless began to seek the provision of further facilities. It was to this end that she enlisted the support of the philanthropist, Sir William Macdonald. He donated some two hundred thousand dollars towards the erection of the Macdonald Institute, which was built on the Ontario Agricultural College grounds at Guelph.[62] The purpose of the Macdonald Institute was to provide young women with an education in domestic science and every year Mrs. Hoodless appeared at the Institute to give a series of lectures on the "Ethical Training of the Homemaker."[63]

Another of Adelaide Hoodless' accomplishments was the publication of a textbook on domestic science entitled Public School Domestic Science. This book, published in 1898, was authorized by the Ontario department of Education, and it contained chapters on such topics as the relation of food to the body, nutrition, food and economy, the cooking of food, recipes, menus, and infants' diets. Also included were calorie charts and chemical analyses of foods.[64]

The life work of Adelaide Hoodless, as she defined it, was "the education of mothers,"[65] and it was to this end that she strived. It has been agreed generally, that her greatest achievement was in founding the Women's Institutes, but she was remembered also for her work in other organizations. Lady Ishbel Marjoribanks Aberdeen, the founder and first president of the N.C.W.C., remembered her in the following way: "Mrs. Hoodless, of Hamilton, our first Treasurer, whose enthusiasm in regard to putting the teaching of household science in its rightful place in the systems of school and university education carried everything before it."[66] This was a fitting testimony to the woman who, on the eve of her fifty-second birthday, died half-way through a speech which she was delivering on that very topic.[67] In 1959, the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada purchased the house where Adelaide Hunter Hoodless was born. The house, which was known as the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead, was located in South Dumfries, Brant County, Ontario. The Federated

Women's Institutes purchased and restored the home as a centennial project.[68]

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless was the indisputable leader of the Women's Institute movement. Her role in the movement was essential if for no other reasons than the most obvious ones, that is, it was she who conceived the idea of the W.I.s, and it was she who founded the first organization. For these reasons alone she was the principal leader. However, Adelaide Hoodless died in 1910, at a time when the movement was just getting underway in Alberta. Certainly she was not forgotten, in fact, she remained as an inspirational figure to W.I. members. But the role of active leadership in Alberta, as well as in other Canadian provinces, passed to new individuals. The success of the Women's Institute movement in Alberta was attributable, in large part, to the enthusiastic work carried out by the movement's early leaders. One such notable leader was Miss Isobel Noble.

Miss Isobel Noble

Miss Noble was the first provincial president of the Alberta Women's Institute and, fortunately, some information pertaining to her background has been preserved. She was American born, although of English extraction. Her paternal grandparents had emigrated together with fifty families from the Lake District of England. They had settled at Shelbyville, Illinois, and it was there that Isobel Noble was born. Her parents provided her with an excellent education. When she was in her teens, she moved with her family to Urbana, Illinois, where she entered State University. She graduated from this institution, and then went on to continue her studies at Cambridge, Yale, and Boston. Her considerable education thus completed, Miss Noble then took a position as Supervisor of Physical Instruction in the public school system of Hartford, Connecticut. She retained this position for five years when a break in health caused her to resign.[69]

A return to health brought with it plans for a change in life-style. In 1908, Isobel Noble and her brother determined to immigrate to Canada. They settled near Daysland, Alberta where they farmed for twenty years. During this time in Canada, Isobel Noble became involved in the Women's Institute movement. She attended the first annual convention of the Alberta Women's Institutes, which was held at the Olds School of Agriculture on 17, 18, and 19 February 1915, and was elected as the first provincial president. In the eight consecutive years that she retained this position, Isobel Noble became a constructive force in laying the foundations of the central provincial organization. As president, Miss Noble had considerable duties to perform, and these caused her to travel about the province quite extensively to engage in speaking tours. However, the fact that she undertook the job for eight years does indicate that she found it agreeable. When she retired as president, the W.I. members invited her to become the provincial supervisor of the newly formed youth organization, the Alberta Women's Institute Girls' Clubs. She accepted this position for four years. Her involvement in Women's Institute activities in Alberta was brought to a close when her brother became ill. He found it necessary to return to the United States, and Isobel went with him. Her interest in women's welfare did not subside with the move. She settled in Wichita, Kansas, became a state officer in the American Association of University Women, and was active in the League of Women Voters.[70] Miss Noble returned to Alberta in 1959 in order to attend the Jubilee Convention of the Women's Institutes in Alberta (1909 to 1959).[71]

Mrs. Ella Beaubier

Mrs. Ella L. Cosgrove Beaubier, the second provincial president of the Alberta Women's Institutes, also was originally from the United States. She was born and raised in Bellevue, Michigan where she attended public and high schools, and completed her education at Olivet College. At sixteen, she embarked upon what became a nine year career as a public school teacher. Ella maintained an early interest in public speaking, and this became an indispensable asset to her when she became involved in Women's Clubs. In 1901, she moved to Upland, California where she organized a Women's Club and became its first president. She then served for two terms as director of the Southern District of California; this responsibility brought with it a sizeable amount of organization work. Ella was elected as state president of the Women's Clubs, but poor health caused her to decline the office.[72]

In 1916, Mrs. Ella Beaubier moved to Alberta where she immediately became involved in the Women's Institutes. She rose in the organization to become director of the Southern District, serving in this position for one term. In May 1922, she was elected provincial president. Mrs. Beaubier was considered to be an authority on parliamentary rule and it was appropriate that as provincial president, she supervised the compiling of the constitution and by-laws of the Alberta Women's Institute. She served as president for three years and then retired from provincial W.I. work. However, after four years, Mrs. Beaubier was elected as provincial recording secretary. She served in this capacity for two terms, from 1929 until 1933.[73] Mrs. Beaubier died on 1 February 1939.[74]

Mrs. Mabel Huyck

Mabel Huyck was the third president of the Alberta Women's Institute. She was born in Crofton, Prince Edward County, Ontario as the youngest member of a family of nine children. Her parents, Anthony B. Jinks and Louise A. H. Dyer, were descendents of United Empire Loyalists. Mabel attended public school at Crofton and high school at Trenton. She then moved to Picton, Ontario in order to complete her model school training. Like Miss Isobel Noble and Mrs. Ella Beaubier, Mabel Huyck spent a number of years in the teaching profession. In 1910 she married Wellington Huyck and the couple then moved to Alberta, settling in the village of Strome. The Huycks moved once again in 1917, to a farm situated just outside Strome. The admiration which W.I. members felt for Mabel Huyck was illustrated by the following compliment which they paid her:

> Mrs. Huyck is a fine type of rural woman, competent yet unpretentious. Hand woven rugs and beautiful counter-panes artistically designed and cleverly wrought adorn her home, while her larder is stocked with canned fruit, vegetables, pickles, jellies, jams, chicken and meats of home production. Here the visitor always finds a cordial welcome.[75]

Mrs. Huyck served for four years as provincial president of the A.W.I., beginning in 1925. She also was involved extensively at the local level. She brought sound judgement and common sense to all the W.I.

positions that she occupied.[76]

Mrs. Adelaide Montgomery

Adelaide Montgomery was fourth in the succession of Alberta Women's Institute presidents and leaders. She and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford E. Vaughn, settled in the Wetaskiwin district in 1894, just two years after the railway line between Edmonton and Calgary was completed. At the time Adelaide was but a tiny girl, and except for one year spent in Minneapolis, she lived her entire life in western Canada. When she grew older her family determined to move into Wetaskiwin so that she could attend public school. There was no high school in the vicinity, but she did manage to receive a high school education through the assistance of her mother and the public school principal who instructed her at recess periods and after school hours. Upon graduation, Adelaide went to Minneapolis for a year in order to study music, and she then returned to Canada for further study. In 1913, she received her L.A.B., and in 1914, she won the gold medal for Soprano Solos at the Provincial Musical Festival. Adelaide married Hugh John Montgomery, a former resident of Bedeque, Prince Edward Island. Hugh had moved to Wetaskiwin in 1898 and he eventually established a business there. Adelaide Montgomery became active in W.I. work in 1916. She was a constituency convener, district director, convener of legislation, and in 1929, provincial president. She occupied this office for four years.[77] Mrs. Montgomery died on 21 January 1952.[78]

Mrs. J. P. Ferguson

Mrs. J. P. Ferguson served two consecutive terms as provincial president of the Alberta Women's Institute, being elected first in May 1933, and again in 1935. She was born near Orangeville, Ontario to Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Crawford Tate. Mrs. Ferguson came to be a well-educated woman, and she made commendable use of her considerable intellectual abilities. She took her public school education in Ontario, and she completed high school in Calgary, Alberta. She then entered Toronto University where she specialized in science and mathematics, and upon graduation, she began a high school teaching career in Ontario. Not satisfied with teaching, Mrs. Ferguson began to study law. In her final year she was awarded the Law Society Gold Medal. In 1918, she married another lawyer, and the couple set up a practice in Trochu, Alberta. Mrs. Ferguson also found time to become involved in Women's Institute work. Before being elected as president, she held the offices of constituency convener, convener of legislation, and district director.[79] By 1959 she still was practicing law at Trochu with her husband and son.[80]

Mrs. Susan Stewart

Susan Stewart served as the sixth provincial president of the Alberta Women's Institute from 1937 until 1940. She was born in Scotland as Susan Barr Vallance, and she attained a rather impressive education during her maiden years. She took a degree of M.A. at the University of Glasgow, and she then took post-graduate work at Lycee de Caen, France. Susan married William Stewart in 1913, and the couple came to live in Alberta. In 1919, Susan became extensively involved with the Women's Institutes, and she held a number of offices in the organization, including that of provincial vice-president for two terms in 1925 and 1928.[81] After her tenure as A.W.I. president, Susan became the editor of the Home and Country magazine from 1941 to 1943. She retired with her husband to Victoria in 1947.[82]

Mrs. William Fleming

Although the office of president was the most significant leadership position at the provincial level, those women who attained the office of A.W.I. vice-president did require certain leadership abilities. One such woman was Mrs. William H. Fleming. She was born on 19 June 1867 in London, Ontario, and she obtained her education at Pond Mills and Strathroy. She then embarked upon a teaching career which necessarily ended when she consented to marry. Mrs. Fleming attended the first provincial W.I. convention which was held in Olds in 1915, and she was elected first vice-president of the newly formed A.W.I. She was re-elected yearly until 1922, when she moved to British Columbia, residing first in Duncan and then in Summerland. She returned to Alberta in 1928.[83] Mrs. Fleming died on 20 February 1951.[84]

Mrs. M. E. Graham

The Women's Institutes in Alberta would not have attained a strong enough following to form a provincial organization without first attaining a number of enthusiastic local branches. For this reason it was necessary that the members of local W.I.s elect effective leaders to the position of local president. This was most significant, particularly in the early years of the formation of a W.I., because the success of a branch often hinged upon the quality of leadership.

Undoubtedly, the most deserving local W.I. president was Mrs. M. E. Graham, for it was she who organized and founded the first Women's Institute in Alberta, the Lea Park W.I., founded on 3 February 1909. Further, Mrs. Graham played a considerable role in popularizing W.I.s in Alberta by continually writing to the provincial government and demanding that it become involved in W.I. work. She certainly deserved a share of the credit when the provincial government did agree to become involved in 1912. Mrs. Graham was of Irish extraction, but she was born and educated in Ontario. She pursued a teaching career in Ontario, and she also was involved in W.I. work, serving as secretary of the Ailsa Craig W.I., and president of the North Middlesex District W.I.[85] Mrs. Graham and her husband Hugh C. Graham settled on a farm in the Lea Park district of Alberta in 1908. Although Mrs. Graham had intended to leave the teaching profession when she married and moved from Ontario she, nevertheless, was pressed into service as a teacher for the schools in Riverton, Tring, and Dewberry on a number of occasions. Mrs. Graham was held in high regard for her farming capabilities:

> A real pioneer farmer's wife, she could handle a three or four-horse team with ease. When her husband was cutting brush on the homestead she did the breaking. She has operated every kind of farm implement, has fed the threshing machine, 'bucked' straw, and ridden all day rounding up cattle for the fair.[86]

The Grahams kept only purebred animals on their farm; these were collies, Clydesdale horses, Shorthorn cattle, and Barred Rock chickens. Mrs. Graham was remembered as being a good natured person who possessed an abundant amount of Irish wit. At the age of seventy she still was taking her daily dip and swim in the Saskatchewan River.[87]

Mrs. Graham died in the fall of 1951.[88]

Mrs. D. R. McIvor

Another local W.I. president was Mrs. D. R. McIvor. She had attained previous experience in W.I. work as a charter member and officer of the Lion's Head Women's Institute in Bruce County, Ontario. She and her husband came west in 1906, and in 1913, when the Cowley Women's Institute was organized, Mrs. McIvor was elected its first president.[89] She occupied the position for a number of years, and after stepping down as president, she filled a number of other W.I. offices at both the local and provincial levels including A.W.I. vice-president in 1923 and 1924. In fact, Mrs. McIvor was involved in the initial formation of the A.W.I. She died in Stettler on 16 July 1954.[90]

Mrs. A. H. Rogers

A highly significant position in the Women's Institutes was that of secretary. The woman in this position was responsible for what went into the records of the W.I., and it was necessary, therefore, that she attend all the meetings and functions that her particular W.I. became involved in. The secretary also worked closely with the president of the W.I., and the signature of both appeared at the end of the minutes of each meeting. A woman who was secretary of the A.W.I. for a number of years was Mrs. A. H. Rogers. She was of Irish-Scottish parentage and born in Ontario. Mrs. Rogers was a graduate of Harbord Collegiate and Toronto Normal School, and she was a teacher for a number of years in Singhampton, Wellesley, and Galt, Ontario.

In 1904, she joined her first Women's Institute at Wellesley, Ontario, and she remained in Institute work thereafter. She was the secretary-treasurer of the A.W.I. for ten years, from 1917 until she retired in 1927. Mrs. Rogers also remained involved in the teaching profession. Since 1919, she was the secretary-treasurer of the Alberta School Trustees' Association, and since its inception in 1930, she was the editor of The Alberta School Trustee. In addition, she served on the Board of Reference, as well as on a number of committees which dealt with curricula and other educational concerns.[91]

Emily Murphy

The Albertan leaders of the Women's Institute movement, such as Emily Murphy, did not perform their leadership roles solely within the province. Emily was one of the W.I. leaders who recognized the need for a central Women's Institute organization which would link the local and provincial Women's Institutes at a national level. She acted upon her perception of this need by aiding in the initiation of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. Emily Murphy was elected as the first president of this new organization which came into existence in 1919 with a national membership of one hundred thousand. She also was able to persuade the wives of provincial premiers and other prominent politicians to assume honorary positions in the organization.[92]

Emily Ferguson Murphy was born near Cookstown, Simcoe County, Ontario in March 1868. All of her grandparents were Irish, including Ogle Robert Gowan, who was a member of Parliament for twenty-seven years and the founder of the Orange Order in Canada.[93] Her forebears also included another member of Parliament, a Senator, and two Supreme Court Judges. Her three brothers became lawyers and one was eventually appointed to the Supreme Court of Ontario.[94] At the age of fourteen, Emily was sent to Toronto to attend Bishop Strachan School, which was an Anglican grammar school for the daughters of the wealthy.[95] On 23 August 1887, she married Arthur Murphy, an Anglican minister, and for the next ten years she functioned happily as a parson's wife, moving from rectory to rectory in Ontario. During that time she bore three daughters. In 1898, the Murphy's went to England for a period of two years;[96] they then returned to Canada and took up residence in Manitoba.[97] In 1907 the Murphy's moved once again, this time to Edmonton, Alberta. Emily lived in Edmonton some twenty-seven years, until her death on 9 October 1933.[98]

Emily Murphy pursued a varied and outstanding public career which she was able to initiate by first becoming a writer. Her books, published under the ill-concealed pseudonym of Janey Canuck, included the following: Janey Canuck in the West, (1910; reprint ed., 1975); Open Trails, (1920); Seeds of Pine, (1914); The Black Candle, (1922; reprint ed., 1973); Our Little Canadian Cousin of the Great North West, (1923); and Bishop Bompas, (1929).[99] She also authored a number of newspaper and magazine articles. Her works attracted a wide readership which in turn enhanced her career as a public figure.

Much of Emily Murphy's lifetime was devoted to improving the status of women, and women's clubs were one of the channels by which she sought to attain this end. In addition to her work in the Federated Women's Institutes, she joined the Equal Franchise League, the National Council of Women, the Canadian Women's Press Club, and the Women's Canadian Club.[100] Mrs. Murphy also exerted much individual effort in improving the status of women. Shortly after her move to Edmonton she became involved in, and ultimately responsible for the passage of the Dower Act of 1911. The Act assured married women of legal inheritance rights where previously they had had none.[101]

Another way in which Emily Murphy improved the status of women lay in her own appointment as the first female police magistrate in the British Empire. The circumstances that led to her appointment began in 1916 when two Edmonton women were despatched by the Law Committee of the Local Council of Women to observe the trial of a group of prostitutes rounded up under suspicious circumstances. The two women's plans to observe the trial were thwarted when the Crown Council suggested that, since the evidence in this case would be unsuitable to be heard by a mixed audience, the ladies should leave the court. Emily Murphy's advice to the Council on this incident was that they press for the establishment of a special court to try cases involving women. A campaign was waged with the result that the Attorney-General of Alberta acceded to the proposal for a women's court and asked Emily Murphy to become its first magistrate. In June 1916 she was sworn in as the first female police magistrate in the British Empire. In December of the same year, Mrs. Alice Jamieson was appointed to the same post in Calgary.[102] As a police magistrate, Emily Murphy worked towards the rehabilitation of the women she sentenced.[103] It also was during this time that she published The Black Candle, which was the first comprehensive report on the drug trade and drug abuse in Canada.

One of Emily Murphy's most famous contributions to raising the status of women was her part as leader in the 'Person's Case'. In 1919, she inspired the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada to pass a unanimous resolution requesting that the Canadian government appoint a woman to the Senate. The National Council of Women also was persuaded to forward a similar resolution.[104] The particular person that the women's clubs had in mind as the first female appointee to the Senate was Emily Murphy herself. However, the difficulty with the appointment lay in the ambiguous and inconsistent use of the third person pronoun in the wording of the B.N.A. Act:

> Section 21 of the Act, which describes the composition of the Senate, contains nothing to bar females from membership, but Section 23, which describes the qualifications of a Senator, uses only the masculine pronoun. Section 24, the key section, reads:
> 'The Governor-General shall from Time to Time, in the Queen's Name, by instrument under the Great Seal of Canada, summon qualified Persons to the Senate; and, subject to the Provisions of this Act, every Person so summoned shall become and be a Member of the Senate and a Senator.[105]

The principal question arising out of Section 24 of the B.N.A. Act was whether or not women were included in the meaning of the term 'persons'.

Emily's brother Mr. Justice Ferguson assisted in drawing her attention to Section 60 of the Supreme Court Act which allows any five interested persons to petition for an order-in-council directing the Supreme Court of Canada to rule on a constitutional point in the B.N.A. Act.[106] This was the course which Emily Murphy chose to follow. The other four persons that Emily invited to become associated with the case were Nellie Mooney McClung (1874-1951), Louise Crummy McKinney

(1868-1933), Irene Marryat Parlby (1878-1965), and Henrietta Muir Edwards (1849-1933). The group drafted a petition and forwarded it to Ottawa at the end of August 1927. The case reached the Supreme Court the following March where it was considered for a period of six weeks. At the end of this time, Chief Justice Anglin delivered the judgement of the Court, which was that women were not eligible for appointment to the Senate.[107]

The five then appealed the Canadian Supreme Court decision to His Majesty's Privy Council in London. The Person's Case was deliberated before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council for four days. On 18 October 1929, Lord Sankey delivered the judgement of the Privy Council reversing the Supreme Court decision.[108] From that day forward Canadian women, as persons, had won the right to Senate seats. Unfortunately, Emily Murphy did not reap the rewards of her labors. The first woman Senator, Mrs. Cairine Wilson, was appointed by Mackenzie King.[109]

Emily Murphy was certainly one of the more famous leaders attracted to the Women's Institute movement. Her association with this organization lent a considerable amount of prestige, as well as credence to the work of the Women's Institutes. Yet the fact that she was well-known did not mean that she was vastly different from the other W.I. leaders of Alberta. She shared with them the basic concern of the Women's Institute movement which was to improve and enhance the lives of rural women.

It is evident that the early leaders of the Women's Institute movement in Alberta were highly qualified women. In general they were capable and ambitious women who had made proper use of their not insignificant intellectual capacities. For them a public school and high school education were commonplace. Even a post-secondary education was not out of the ordinary and many had university degrees. Teaching was the most popular profession amongst the W.I. leaders. It can be surmised that as teachers these women had become accustomed to speaking to groups of assembled people. Teaching would have given them experience in imparting ideas to others, and it was precisely this sort of experience that was to prove invaluable in aiding them to fulfill their responsibility of articulating the ideas of the W.I. movement. It was most useful in a leadership function to have organizational abilities, and this was something that could be gained by having taught school and by having operated both a house filled with children and a homestead. Perhaps even more useful in organizing a Women's Institute would have been the experience that a number of these leaders had gained in the Women's Institutes of Ontario. The Women's Institutes of Alberta were fortunate in that they were able to attract competent leaders; the movement benefited from their range of talents. Like other W.I. members, these women were concerned with their communities; their spheres of action encompassed more than their own homes.

Presidents of the Alberta Women's Institute[110]

Miss Isobel Noble, Daysland	1915-1921
Mrs. J. N. Beaubier, Champion	1921-1925
Mrs. Wellington Huyck, Strome	1925-1929
Mrs. H. J. Montgomery, Wetaskiwin	1929-1933
Mrs. J. P. Ferguson, Trochu	1933-1937
Mrs. Wm. Stewart, Peace River	1937-1941

Effective Means of Communication

The third factor explaining the successful mobilization of the Women's Institute movement in Alberta is the existence of effective channels for communication. Their presence greatly increased the likelihood that potential supporters of the movement, dispersed throughout the province, would unite in a collective effort. They also facilitated the goals of the movement by permitting the transmission of directives to potential supporters such as the times and dates of Women's Institute meetings. Access to modern means of communication in the form of newspapers and radios made it much easier for leaders to reach members, both actual and potential.[111]

Channels for communication, at least in the nascent stages of the Women's Institute movement in Alberta, were anything but elaborate. In actual fact, the movement was initiated by word-of-mouth. Both Mrs. Graham and Mrs. Johnston had belonged to Women's Institutes in Ontario, and both had shared the similar experience of moving with their husbands to homesteads near Vermilion, Alberta. The two women missed the Women's Institute activities that they had left behind in Ontario and so they determined to organize one in their neighborhood. They then went around their district, from homestead to homestead, inviting women to attend the first Women's Institute meeting, to be held on 3 February 1909 at Mrs. Johnston's home. Thus it was via a type of 'grapevine' arrangement that the Lea Park Women's Institute, the first in Alberta, got its start.

An especially novel means of popularizing the movement was put into effect when the provincial government decided to become involved in the Women's Institute movement. This was the Demonstration Trains. Demonstration Trains had been in operation in Alberta as early as 1909, but in 1912-13, the 'Mixed Farming Special' included in addition to demonstrations, lectures on Women's Institutes and the work they were involved in.[112] This was an extremely effective way of reaching rural farm women since the trains stopped in a number of small centers along the railway line. The arrival of a Demonstration Train was considered to be something of an event so that the entire district would make an effort to attend. Hence, a number of women were introduced to Women's Institutes without having to first commit themselves to attending a W.I. meeting. The Mixed Farming Special was so successful that two cars were added for demonstrations and lectures on women's work and, in what was a truly enlightened gesture, a nursery car was added so that mothers could leave their babies and young children in the care of a nurse, while they attended the lectures and demonstrations.[113] A number of Women's Institute branches were organized by Demonstration Trains. For example, the Prairie Circle Women's Institute was organized by a Demonstration Train in 1915.[114] Shortly after the E.D. & B.C. Railway was completed, a Demonstration Train pulled into the equally new depot at Peace River Crossing to organize the first Women's Institute in the Peace River country on 23 July 1917.[115]

The provincial government itself played an important role in the dissemination of information about the movement. It hired knowledgeable personnel to staff the Demonstration Trains and thereby ensured, as much as possible, that the information received by rural people on

Women's Institutes and other topics was accurate. The Women's Institutes became associated with the provincial department of Agriculture as the responsibility of the Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes in 1912. At this time a further step was taken in opening channels for communication when the government established the position of Superintendent of Women's Institutes. This position was filled by Miss MacAdam, who was succeeded by Miss Georgina Stiven in 1912,[116] she in turn was succeeded by Miss Mary MacIsaac, a graduate of the Toronto Hospital, in 1914. The Superintendents made frequent visits to the local branches of the Women's Institutes. If a branch wished to contact the Superintendent, all that was necessary was to address a letter to the Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes, Parliament Buildings, Edmonton, Alberta. This address was supplied on the inside cover of every government issued minute book. In addition, the government sent out circulars and bulletins to the local branches, and it encouraged individual members to make contact, even if they were in need of something so seemingly innocuous as source material for a paper topic to be presented at a W.I. meeting.[117]

Newspapers traditionally had served as channels for communication; this, after all, was their principal purpose. The newspaper business abounded on the western prairies, and a number of them featured separate 'women's pages'. Some of these were the Farmers' Advocate, the Norwest Farmer, the Calgary Albertan, and The U.F.A. The women's page of the Grain Growers' Guide was entitled "The Country Homemakers," and it was edited by Francis Marion Beynon from 1912 to 1917. The Western Producer's women's page, entitled "Mainly for Women" was edited by Violet McNaughton for twenty-five years.[118] The local farm papers frequently carried the news and announcements of the W.I. branches in their particular districts. In addition, the Alberta Women's Institute adopted the Farm and Ranch Review as the official Institute paper. Evidently the A.W.I. was satisfied with the journal because on 15 March 1920, at a conference of constituency conveners, district directors, and conveners of standing committees they passed a resolution to continue to recognize the Farm and Ranch Review as the official paper for the A.W.I.[119] The A.W.I. opened another more direct channel of communication between itself and the local branches by issuing bulletins. Around 1936, the bulletins were amalgamated into the A.W.I. magazine For Home and Country.[120] This magazine is still in production today.[121] In 1920, the A.W.I. determined to form another channel for communication with the national organization by subscribing to the Canadian Home Journal which was the recognized medium of Canadian Institute news.[122]

Radio, as a modern means of mass communication, was an excellent device for bringing about the mobilization of social movements. William Aberhart, for example, was able to build up a personal following of between two and three hundred thousand Albertans through his religious broadcasts of the 1920s. In 1932 he then used these broadcasts to propagate Social Credit ideas which were of immeasurable value in mobilizing the Social Credit movement.[123] The Women's Institute movement, however, was unable to make use of the radio until 1931, when a series of radio talks were given from Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge under the supervision of Mrs. Short, Mrs. Campbell, and

Mrs. Thompson.[124] Thereafter, local radio stations made weekly reports on W.I. news and social events.

In the eleven years spanning from 1909 until 1920, the Women's Institute movement had been fully mobilized in Alberta. During this space of time the movement had been initiated, it had achieved government support, it had established a provincial organization, and it had attracted hundreds of female supporters as members. The success of the movement has been attributed to its attractive ideology, its strong leadership, and its utilization of effective means of communication. Equally important to the success of the movement were the programmes of activities offered by the Institutes and the opportunities for social relationships which isolated rural women so craved. It is this aspect of the movement which is the subject of the succeeding chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1] Samuel D. Clark, J. Paul Grayson, and Linda M. Grayson, eds., Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Canada (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Limited, 1975), pp. 12-18.

[2] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 5.

[3] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 February 1909 to 11 March 1911, Meeting of 3 February 1909, Provincial Archives.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., Meeting of March 1909.

[6] The members of the Lea Park Women's Institute for 1909 are listed in the Minute book.

[7] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 7.

[8] Quoted in A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 4.

[9] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 8.

[10] In a letter from Georgina Stiven to Mrs. Graham, the number of reports of meetings which had to be sent to the Department of Agriculture to receive the annual grant is mentioned as four rather than three. Georgina G. Stiven to Mrs. M. E. Graham, 6 December 1912, Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 11 March 1911 to 21 December 1912, Provincial Archives.

[11] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 8.

[12] Georgina G. Stiven to Mrs. M. E. Graham, 16 December 1912, Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 11 March 1911 to 21 December 1912, Provincial Archives.

[13] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 8.

[14] Georgina G. Stiven to Mrs. M. E. Graham, 6 December 1912.

[15] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 8.

[16] Georgina G. Stiven to Mrs. M. E. Graham, 16 December 1912.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 February 1909 to 11 March 1911, Meeting of 7 April 1909.

[19] Ibid., Meeting of 13 January 1910.

[20] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 8.

[21] Ibid., p. 9.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., p. 10.

[24] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 17, 18, 19 February 1915, Provincial Archives.

[25] Ibid.

[26] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 10.

[27] Mrs. Lillian Hansen, Munson W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[28] Mrs. Alice Zeeb, Secretary, Walsh W.I., personal letter, 6 December 1982.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter,

6 January 1983.

[31] Mrs. Bernice Abell, Secretary, Kinniburgh W.I., personal letter, 22 November 1982.

[32] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country" by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[33] Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983.

[34] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 32.

[35] Approximately twenty members joined the Springvale W.I. when it was inaugurated on 8 December 1927. For some reason this branch disbanded after five years of activity. Twenty years later another branch was organized in the same district ". . . and at this time it is still functioning and in excellent form." Mrs. Kathleen Code, Springvale W.I., personal letter, 11 December 1982.

[36] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[37] Clark, Grayson, and Grayson, Prophecy and Protest, p. 13.

[38] Annette K. Baxter, Preface to The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914, by Karen J. Blair (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Ltd., 1980), p. xii.

[39] Nancy M. Sheehan, "Temperance, the WCTU, and Education in Alberta, 1905-1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 1980), p. 8.

[40] Veronica Strong-Boag, Introduction to In Times Like These, by Nellie McClung (U.S.A.: D. Appleton and Company, 1915; reprint ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. viii.

[41] Carol Bacchi, "Divided Allegiances: The Response of Farm Women to Suffrage," in A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), p. 104.

[42] McClung, In Times Like These, p. 90.

[43] Veronica Strong-Boag, "The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929," National Museum of Man Mercury Series, paper no. 18 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976), p. 7.

[44] Sheehan, "Temperance, the WCTU, and Education," p. vi.

[45] Karen Blair has gone so far as to argue that many members of women's clubs were really "feminists under the skin." See Blair, The Clubwoman as Feminist, p. 1.

[46] Wayne Roberts, "'Rocking the Cradle for the World': The New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto, 1877-1914," in A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s, ed. Linda Kealey, p. 45.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Maternal feminism was certainly a powerful force within the Canadian club movement. Yet, a word of caution is necessary. While the idea of maternal feminism has proven most useful to historians in interpreting the club movement, it does not necessarily provide the only, or even a complete understanding of feminism in early twentieth century Canada. For example, Western feminism might be interpreted in terms of the distinctive forces operating on the frontier. It would be inadvisable to put forward broad conceptual generalizations about Canadian feminism at this infant stage of research in the field. The advice of Deborah Gorham should be heeded: "There were other motivating forces very different from the disposition to engage in civic housekeeping, and until more is known about a greater number of the women involved, perhaps we should withhold judgement about the universality of this outlook. It would be unfortunate to enclose Canadian feminism in a new orthodoxy at this stage in the discovery of its history." (Deborah Gorham, "The Canadian Suffragists," in Women in the Canadian Mosaic, ed. Gwen Matheson (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1976), p. 53).

[49] This statement appears in the early minutes of the Stoney Creek Women's Institute, which was the founding organization of the W.I. movement. It reappears often in the literature on Women's Institutes. See, for example, Annie Walker, Edith M. Collins, and M. McIntyre Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement: In Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Women's Institutes of Ontario (Toronto: Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, 1948), p. 4, and the President's message in Golden Jubilee of Beausejour Women's Institute by the Beausejour Women's Institute (Manitoba: n.p., 1973).

[50] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from

3 February 1909 to 11 March 1911, Meetings of March and April 1909.

[51] Ibid., Meeting of 7 April 1909.

[52] A.W.I., A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," pp. 4-5.

[53] The Women's Institute Act, (Being Chapter 21 of the Statutes of Alberta, 1916, with 1919 Amendments) (Acc. No. 69.289, File no. 17, microfilm, Provincial Archives), section 3, subsections 1-4.

[54] Clark, Grayson, and Grayson, Prophecy and Protest, pp. 14-15.

[55] Ruth Howes, "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, 1857-1910," in The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and Their Times, ed. Mary Quayle Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), pp. 107-108.

[56] Jean Bannerman, Leading Ladies: Canada (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing Company, 1977), p. 182.

[57] Howes, "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless," p. 106.

[58] Ibid., p. 109.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Walker, Collins, and Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 8.

[61] Howes, "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless," p. 110.

[62] Walker, Collins, and Hood, Fifty Years of Achievement, p. 8.

[63] Howes, "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless," p. 110.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., p. 106.

[66] Lord and Lady Aberdeen, "We Twa", vol 2 (Glasgow: W. Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1925), p. 103.

[67] Howes, "Adelaide Hunter Hoodless," p. 117.

[68] Ibid., pp. 104-105.

[69] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 48.

[70] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[71] Home and Country, vol. XXV, no. 2, June 1959.

[72] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 50.

[73] Ibid., pp. 50-51.

[74] Home and Country, vol. XXV, no. 2, June 1959.

[75] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 51.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., p. 52.

[78] Home and Country, vol. XXV, no. 2, June 1959.

[79] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 54.

[80] Home and Country, vol. XXV, no. 2, June 1959.

[81] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 56.

[82] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 55.

[83] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 55.

[84] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 60.

[85] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937,"

p. 5.

[86] Ibid., p. 47.

[87] Ibid.

[88] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 49.

[89] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 56.

[90] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 61.

[91] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 57.

[92] Donna James, Emily Murphy, The Canadians Series (Don Mills: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 1977), p. 36.

[93] Eleanor Harman, "Five Persons From Alberta," in The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and Their Times, ed. Mary Quayle Innis, p. 159.

[94] Brian Anthony and Robert Solomon, Introduction to The Black Candle, by Emily F. Murphy (Toronto: Thomas Allen Publisher, 1922; reprint ed., Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973), p. 1.

[95] James, Emily Murphy, p. 8.

[96] Ibid., pp. 12-14.

[97] Ibid., p. 25.

[98] Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage, and Anne Wheeler, eds., A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1976), p. 223.

[99] James, Emily Murphy, p. 64.

[100] Ibid., p. 36.

[101] Strong-Boag, Introduction to In Times Like These, by McClung, p. xi.

[102] Harman, "Five Persons From Alberta," p. 162.

[103] Rasmussen, Rasmussen, Savage, and Wheeler, A Harvest Yet to Reap, p. 223.

[104] Harman, "Five Persons From Alberta," p. 162.

[105] Ibid., p. 164.

[106] Ibid., p. 165.

[107] Ibid., pp. 173-174.

[108] Ibid., p. 174.

[109] Eleanor Harman's account of the Person's Case in "Five Persons From Alberta" is one of the better articles on the subject. However, a number of other sources deal with the Person's Case. These include Donna James, Emily Murphy, (1977); Rosa L. Shaw, Proud Heritage: A History of the National Council of Women of Canada, (1957); Mary Lile Benham, Nellie McClung, (1975); Veronica Strong-Boag's Introduction to In Times Like These by Nellie McClung (1915; reprint ed., 1980); Candace Savage, Our Nell: A Scrapbook Biography of Nellie McClung, (1979); Byrne Hope Sanders, Emily Murphy, Crusader, (1945); and Gwen Matheson and V. E. Lang, "Nellie McClung: 'Not a Nice Woman'" in Women in the Canadian Mosaic, (1976) edited by Gwen Matheson.

[110] A.W.I., Report of the Alberta Women's Institutes, 1961-63, p. 112.

[111] Clark, Grayson, and Grayson, Prophecy and Protest, pp. 16-17.

[112] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 8.

[113] Ibid., p. 11.

[114] Ibid., p. 39.

[115] Ibid., p. 32.

[116] Georgina G. Stiven to Mrs. M. E. Graham, 6 December 1912.

[117] Georgina G. Stiven to Mrs. M. E. Graham, 16 December 1912.

[118] Rasmussen, Rasmussen, Savage, and Wheeler, A Harvest Yet to Reap, pp. 88-89.

[119] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 15 March 1920.

[120] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 28.

[121] First learned in conversation with Mrs. Thorne of the Fort Saskatchewan Women's Institute, 12 January 1983.

[122] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 15 March 1920.

[123] Clark, Grayson, and Grayson, Prophecy and Protest, p. 16.

[124] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 26.

CHAPTER IV

INTERNAL ACTIVITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Women's Institutes in Alberta had two distinct aspects to their work, one which included the activities performed within the organization for the benefit of the members, and the other, the activities performed outside the organization for the benefit of communities. This chapter will consider the internal activities of Women's Institutes while the succeeding chapter will address the subject of their community activities. The in-house activities of Women's Institutes were of an educational and social nature. Generally, these corresponded to the needs of rural women. This concern for the educational and social well-being of the individual was expressed at the provincial level right from the beginning.

Internal Activities and Relationships of the A.W.I.

On 17, 18, and 19 February 1915 the first annual convention of the Women's Institutes of Alberta was held at the School of Agriculture in Olds. This event marked the birth of the Alberta Women's Institute (A.W.I.). Since 1909, the Lea Park W.I. had operated as the sole Institute in the province. In 1912, it was joined by a number of newly formed local Institutes which had been organized by the Department of Agriculture. The fact that by 1915 there was enough grass-roots support to hold a provincial convention was testimony to the fact that the Women's Institute movement had been firmly launched in the province of Alberta. As the movement's central provincial organization, the A.W.I. was vested with significant responsibilities. In the early years, it acted as a liaison between the provincial government and the local branches. The A.W.I. soon became the pivotal organization of the movement, responsible for linking the local branches into a solid network. Thus, it was the A.W.I. that assumed the responsibility of guiding and consolidating the movement.

The first convention at Olds set a precedent which lasted until the early 1930s. From 1915, the annual convention was the principal opportunity by which the local branches met under the auspices of the A.W.I. That is not to say the A.W.I. did not have contact with the local branches throughout any given year. Indeed, effective means of communication were maintained by means of letters, bulletins, and visits by A.W.I. officers to the meetings of numerous local Institutes. In addition, when the district and constituency organization was introduced in 1917, the District Directors became a part of the A.W.I. executive.

It was at the first convention in February 1915 that a slate of executive officers was elected to the A.W.I. Miss Isobel Noble was elected the first provincial president. The programme of the convention related to numerous aspects of women's lives. The Hon. Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture, opened the first session with an account of the Schools of Agriculture in the province; he encouraged W.I. members to send girls to the School of Household Science. Miss MacIsaac, Superintendent of Women's Institutes, discussed the ways in which the Department of Agriculture was attempting to reach the women of Alberta vis-à-vis Demonstration Trains and short courses on Domestic Science. Mrs. Hill of Edmonton spoke on "Woman's Place in the Development of Alberta" and urged that women realize the value of maintaining varied interests. A paper was given by Miss Hayward of the Claresholm School of Agriculture on "The Furnishing of a Home" and another paper was given by Mrs. Wilson of Carmangay on "The Place of the Daughter in the Home." More speeches were heard at the evening banquet which was attended by delegates of both the Women's Institutes and the Agricultural Fairs Association.

At the second session, Mrs. Muldren delivered an address on "The Efficient Woman in the Home" and Miss Carlyle of Vermilion gave a paper on the "Value of Keeping Household Accounts." These were followed by one minute reports from the delegates of the local branches. One of the many features of the convention was an address by Mrs. Nellie McClung. Delegates of the Agricultural Fairs Association joined the W.I. members to hear Mrs. McClung's thoughts on the problems facing all women and particularly the women in rural districts.[1]

The second provincial convention was held in the Banquet Room of the Macdonald Hotel in Edmonton on 1 and 2 March 1916. It was the Premier, Hon. A. L. Sifton, who gave the opening address at the convention. One of the numerous speeches given was by Miss Gilmour, Superintendent of the Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton. Her topic dealt with babies and the close relation between the high rate of infant mortality and malnutrition. Nellie McClung spoke on "Making the Best of Ourselves."[2] Between the first and second provincial conventions the number of Institutes increased from forty-two to one hundred and seven.[3]

At the third provincial convention, held at the Palliser Hotel in Calgary on 14, 15, and 16 March 1917, a resolution was passed adopting the creed of the Federation of Women's Clubs of the United States as an optional opening exercise for all W.I. meetings.[4] Five hundred delegates were present at this convention. One of the guest speakers was Lieutenant Governor Brett who gave an address on the purpose and aims of the Women's Institutes. Mr. A. H. Clark, the M.P. for Calgary, spoke on the legal status of women in relation to the Property Act. "Picking Diamonds in the Rough" was the title of an address by Mr. A. W. MacDonald, Provincial Superintendent of Dependent Children. Mr. MacDonald favored Mother's Pensions, and he recommended that special homes and educational facilities be established for the mentally defective and for delinquent girls.[5]

The constituency and district organization was first instituted in 1917:

> . . . one representative from each constituency [was elected] to act with their district Director as a District Advisory Committee. This Constituency Convener having as her Committee a representative from each Institute in her Constituency.[6]

These changes were formally outlined by Miss MacIsaac, Superintendent of Women's Institutes, at the A.W.I. convention in 1918. A meeting of the Advisory Board had been held in Olds on 16 May 1917, at which the dates for the District Conferences had been arranged. Present at the meeting were Miss MacIsaac, Miss Noble, Mrs. Grisdale, Mrs. Montgomery, Mrs. Hummon, and Mrs. Rogers. It was agreed that the programme for these meetings would be as follows: the first session (on day one) would include a speaker and demonstrations; the second session (on day two) would include reports of the Institutes, a question box, and discussion.[7]

In November 1917 the first district conferences were held in the three Schools of Agriculture in Alberta. The District Conference of the South opened at the Claresholm School of Agriculture on 6 November 1917 with Mrs. Hummon of Carmangay, A.W.I. Director for the South, presiding. Miss Isobel Noble, A.W.I. president, addressed the Conference on "The Responsibility of Office." Miss Hayward, Instructor in Home Economics, gave a canning demonstration of meats, vegetables, and fruit using the cold pack method. Mrs. Louise McKinney of Claresholm spoke to the members on the laws of Alberta as they affected women. The conference ran for two days, and in that time each of the Institutes in the district presented a report. All mentioned Red Cross work and raising money for the war.[8]

On 8 November 1917 the District Conference of the Central Division opened at the Olds School of Agriculture with fifty-five delegates present. Mrs. Montgomery, the A.W.I. District Director, was absent; acting in her place was Mrs. Fleming, First Vice-President of the A.W.I. Approximately one hundred reports of local Institutes were read, many dealt with Red Cross Work and war funds. Miss Isobel Noble, the A.W.I. president, spoke on "The Responsibility of Office" and Mrs. Louise McKinney of Claresholm spoke on the laws of Alberta as they affected women. The conference ran for two days.[9]

The Northern District held its first District Conference at the Vermilion School of Agriculture on 14 November 1917. Forty-five delegates were present with Mrs. Grisdale, A.W.I. Director for the North, presiding. Miss Isobel Noble, the A.W.I. president, again delivered her speech on "The Responsibility of Office." Mrs. Edwards of the N.C.W.C. gave an address, and a demonstration of Meat Substitutes was given by the Senior Class under the direction of their instructor, Miss Lavalle. The Institute reports were read; all mentioned their work for the Red Cross.[10]

The fourth annual convention of the A.W.I. was held at the MacDonald Hotel in Edmonton on 9, 10, and 11 March 1918. Eight hundred women attended. It was reported that over the year W.I. membership had increased from three thousand seven hundred to eight thousand. The number of branches had risen from one hundred and thirty-five to two hundred and twelve. Also during the year "35 short course schools had been held, 50 demonstrations in Canning, 40 in home nursing and 10,000 copies of the Home Canning Bulletin had been distributed . . . ."[11] Nellie McClung gave an address concerning the immense importance of woman power in Canada and Dr. Helen McMurchy spoke on the topic of mental defectives. A number of school officials, teachers, and members of the medical profession attended Dr. McMurchy's address. The most popular resolution passed at the convention was that women be granted the same homestead rights as men. Other resolutions endorsed equal parental rights, the Mother's Pension Bill, and that each branch take Baby Welfare as the special work of the year.[12]

The fifth annual convention was held in the Central Methodist Church in Calgary from 11 to 14 March 1919. Twenty-eight new Institutes had been formed over the year, making a total of two hundred and forty; the membership increased from eight thousand to nine thousand five hundred. From 1918 to 1919, there were seventy-nine short courses in Foods and Cookery, thirty-four short courses in sewing, twenty-six short courses in nursing, and three hundred and nine demonstrations. Miss MacIsaac gave an account of the inauguration meeting of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, which was formed in 1919 with Mrs. Emily Murphy of Edmonton as its first president. The delegates at the convention again passed a resolution that parents have equal rights of guardianship over their children; this time it was granted. Another resolution drew attention to the inconvenience and expenditure caused in having divorce courts situated in Ottawa only. It was resolved that uniform divorce courts be established in each province; this too was granted. However, the resolution that women receive equal pay with men for equal work was not granted, although the Premier did state that he was in favor of the resolution.[13]

At the sixth annual convention, held at the First Baptist Church in Edmonton from 16 to 19 March 1920, Miss MacIsaac, Superintendent of Women's Institutes, reported that the number of Institutes in the province was two hundred and sixty-five. The total membership was thirteen thousand one hundred and fifty. The total attendance at lectures and demonstrations for the year was twenty-one thousand women. A resolution was again passed concerning Mother's Pensions:

> RESOLVED that we express our appreciation to the Alberta Legislature for the passing of the Mother's Pension Act, and that we earnestly request that the Act be extended to include all wives who have been deserted for three years who have children to support, also wives whose husbands are living but are permanently totally incapacitated.[14]

Another of the many resolutions passed at the convention was the following, presented by the Cowley Women's Institute:

> WHEREAS the Medical Inspection of Schools, Free Clinics, etc., have proven that a large percentage of our children are suffering from malnutrition, and
>
> WHEREAS these cases are not confined to the homes of the poor where food is sometimes scarce, and
>
> WHEREAS the H.C. of L. makes it necessary for the housekeeper to have a knowledge of food values, and the effects of the combination of different foods,
>
> THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we consider it in the interest of Child Welfare and Public Health--that the Department of Agriculture take steps to remedy these matters in part, by correspondence course in Domestic Science lessons on foodstuffs--their value and relation to the human system--the proper combination of foods--as well as single ways of cooking our staple foods. Said course to be given in the most simple language that all may understand, and to be Free except perhaps for a small fee to cover cost of examinations--and that certificates be awarded to those completing course and passing prescribed examinations.[15]

This resolution is evidence of the emphasis placed by the members of Women's Institutes on education. Further, in particularly significant cases such as the malnutrition of children, the W.I.s called for the proper education of all women in Alberta rather than W.I. members only.

The A.W.I. conventions of the 1920s continued to be held on an annual basis, and in much the same manner as the earlier ones. By the 1930s, however, the A.W.I. began to experience the strains of the financial depression. In 1932 the Council sent a circular to each of the local branches. The circular recommended that the 1932 convention be cancelled and that, thereafter, the conventions be staged on a biennial basis. These recommendations were accepted.[16]

Local Women's Institutes

Local branches of Women's Institutes reflected the A.W.I.'s concern for the educational and social well-being of rural women. There are over twenty-five specific Women's Institutes which will be considered in this chapter in light of their in-house activities. These particular organizations were formed between the years 1909 and 1940 and, incidentally, the majority of them are still in existence today. They include:

- the Lea Park W.I., founded on 3 February 1909
- the Verdant Valley W.I., founded on 12 May 1912
- the Walsh W.I., founded on 31 October 1912
- the Munson W.I., founded on 27 November 1912
- the Argyle W.I., founded in 1913
- the Rugby W.I., founded in 1913
- the Aldersyde W.I., founded in 1914
- the Mountain View W.I., founded in 1915
- the Penhold W.I., founded on 6 July 1916
- the Loyalist W.I., founded in 1917
- the Garrington W.I., founded on 25 October 1917 (renamed the Mary Riley W.I. in January 1940)
- the Kinniburgh W.I., founded on 18 July 1918
- the Independence W.I., founded in 1919
- the Ohaton W.I., founded in September 1919

- the Westlock W.I., founded on 28 October 1919
- the Bashaw W.I., founded in 1920
- the Langdon W.I., founded in December 1920
- the Burdett W.I., founded in 1921
- the Warspite W.I., founded in 1921
- the Kirkcaldy W.I., founded in 1921
- the Kinsella W.I., founded in 1922
- the Veteran W.I., founded on 16 February 1925
- the Glendale W.I., founded in May 1925
- the Willing Workers W.I., founded in November 1926
- the Springvale W.I., founded on 8 December 1927
- the Boyle W.I., founded on 9 October 1929
- the Falun W.I., founded in January 1930
- the Gordon W.I., founded on 14 July 1938.[17]

The information on these organizations has been compiled from minute books, programme forms, contemporary records, the recollections of senior members, and newspaper clippings.

Educational Activities of Women's Institutes

The principal areas of in-house activities amongst the local Women's Institutes in Alberta were social and educational. Both areas were pursued with great vigor. Each local Women's Institute had a number of 'Standing' or 'Education Committees' which were intended as vehicles for the education of members. The specific committees varied from Institute to Institute, depending upon the particular interests of the members. For example, the Falun W.I. maintained Education Committees on Child Welfare, Public Health, Household

Economics, Education and Better Schools, Agriculture, Canadian Industries, Immigration, Legislation, Canadianization, and National Events.[18] The Committees of the Aldersyde W.I. included Agriculture, Home Economics, Child Welfare, Canadianization, Immigration, Legislation, and Publicity.[19] The Langdon W.I. had Standing Committees on Agriculture, Education, Health, Canadianization, Economics, Home Industry, Legislation, and Peace.[20] The Walsh W.I. maintained Committees on Agriculture, Canadian Industries, Citizenship and Legislation, Education and Cultural Activities, Handicrafts, International Affairs, Social Services, and Environmental Conservation.[21] The Education Committees of the Penhold W.I. were the Promotion of Better Schools, Immigration, Legislation, Household Economics, Child Welfare, and Agriculture.[22] Those of the Independence W.I. were Education, Citizenship, Agriculture, Canadian Industries, Home Economics, Handicraft, and Current Events.[23] Lastly, the Westlock W.I. had Committees on Health and Welfare, Home Economics, Handicraft, Cultural Activities, Environment and Conservation, Agriculture, Canadian Industries, Citizenship, Education, Social Services, and World Affairs.[24] Each Standing Committee had an education convener who was elected by the members to deal with her subject at least one meeting in the year. The education convener could research the topic herself and present a paper, or she could enlist the help of an outside speaker or demonstrator. Popular speakers were nurses, teachers, ministers, visiting friends, and government personnel. In this way, Women's Institute members were treated to some excellent presentations during their monthly or biweekly meetings.

There was a great diversity of topics upon which Women's Institute members chose to research and write their papers. This diversity reflected the particular interests of the members, as well as their enormous thirst for information and knowledge in a variety of areas which directly or indirectly influenced their lives. Many of the paper topics that were recorded in the minute books and programme forms coincided with the subjects of the Education Committees. Hence, there were numerous papers entitled "Canadianization," "Immigration," "Agriculture," or "Education and Better Schools." In a number of instances, however, the precise paper title was recorded so that there was a better indication of the contents of the paper. In a few circumstances, the secretaries actually added some notes to the minute books recording the major points made in papers.

One general area which elicited much interest among the members of local Women's Institutes in Alberta was food and nutrition. Numerous papers were written on this topic including "Fish and its Food Value," "School Children's Lunches," "Harvest Meals," "Vegetable Cookery," and "Feeding the Family." Between the years 1909 and 1940, the women of the rural districts in Alberta were able to provide nutritional meals for their families by utilizing the information that they received at W.I. meetings. Some examples included "How to Can Salmon," "Blueberry and Rhubarb Jam," "Home Butter Making," "Pickling," "Canning Fruit and Vegetables," and "Care of Whole Beef and Cooking all Parts of It." Other related topics of an educational nature were "Cutting the Grocery Bill," "Consumerism," "Use of Dandelions for Dye," and "Why is Sugar so Scarce and High?" The value of this type of information was illustrated by Mrs. F. C. Hanes, a charter member of the Glendale Women's Institute, which came into being in May of 1925. Mrs. Hanes wrote:

> One would ask, what has all this to do with a Farm Woman's life? Much of it gave food for thought besides learning Sanitation for homes, family and keeping food. We only had a cellar to cool our food. No fridges or freezers. We learned to empty tin cans as soon as opened. Never leave food of any kind sitting around without being covered. Nutrition was uppermost. Fresh meat was canned or cured, eggs were put down in crocks with water glass to seal them. We learned to cook and bake with less eggs when they were scarce. We learned to make soap. Make butter. Bake bread when dry yeast was used, this was set the night before. If one forgot to set their bread the night before one relied on baking powder biscuits. I never won a prize for baking or cooking.[25]

The information which W.I. members received on food and nutrition, when put into perspective, illustrates quite clearly that Women's Institutes were interested in much more than merely exchanging recipes with one another.

W.I. members also were interested in ways and means of carrying out their occupations as homemakers more effectively. It was to this end that they wrote reports for each other on "Labor Saving Devices in the Home," "Uses of Electricity," and "Time Budget." Other related topics were "Homes and Home Keeping," "Homemaking," and "Home Sanitation." In 1924, the Chairperson of Agriculture for the Aldersyde W.I. presented a paper on "How to Beautify a Farm Home."[26] The concept of sanitation, particularly as it related to health, was extremely important to the members of Women's Institutes. These women, living in rural areas as they did, were cognizant of the fact that medical aid was not readily available to isolated farm families. Therefore, they took it upon themselves to educate one another in the various methods of maintaining good health. Some of the related paper topics were "Principles of Good Health and How to Observe," "Child Welfare," "Child Welfare and Public Health," "Health Through Cleanliness," "Mosquitos," "Caring for Babies," "The Nation's Sweet Tooth," and "The Value of Cheerfulness." In the event that ill health did befall families, W.I. members were prepared to cope through the education they had received in "Home Nursing," "Battle Against Cancer," "Infantile Paralysis," and "Measles and the After Effects of the Disease." Another paper, entitled "Care of Sick and Invalids," related the importance of ventelating the sick room, avoiding noise, preparing the bed for the patient, cleanliness, bedside conversation and visitors, and convalescence.[27] Papers also were presented on "State Medicine," and the "History of Health Legislation in the Province," so that members maintained a diversified and rather broad understanding of the field of health.

Yet another major area of interest amongst the membership of the local Women's Institutes in Alberta was schooling. Since the one room schools of the rural districts often lacked many of the resources enjoyed by urban schools, occupants of rural communities did what they could to lend support to their schools. One of the many ways in which the local Women's Institutes became involved was through the dissemination of information to members. Methods of aiding the schools were presented in reports such as "Co-operation Between Home and School," "What a Child Should be Taught Before he Goes to School," and "How to Treat a Teacher." Women's Institutes also reported on current educational trends such as "The New Educational Vehicle," "The New School System," "Education in the Rural School," "Examinations in Language and Mathematics," and "Adult Education." Interest also was generated in creating a home atmosphere that was conducive to learning. Hence, papers were written on "Juvenile Books," "Books for the Home Library," and "How the School Improves the Home." There even was a paper produced on "The Religious Instruction of a Child." By keeping abreast of educational issues and trends, members of Women's Institutes were better able to contribute to the rural educational system in an informed and useful manner.

Members of local Women's Institutes were well informed too on the province's legal system, particularly as it pertained to women and children. Papers were presented at local meetings on "Legislation," "Care of Public Property," "New Legislation Passed During the Year," "Canadian Penal Institutions," and "Legislation on Mortgaged Homes and Farms." Papers dealing with children and the law included "The Rights of Children," "Child Welfare," and "How Alberta Cares for its Delinquent, Dependent, and Mental Defectives." Rural women also were concerned with their own legal status. Alberta at this time was a young province and W.I. members were determined that women should receive adequate legal protection. In the 1900s, they wrote reports on the "Dower Law," "Homesteads for Women," and "Votes for Women." By the 1920s, their legal concerns had evolved to the "Progress of Women" and the "Legal Status of Women." Once women had been granted the vote and recognized as persons under the law, their legal concerns did not cease. In the 1930s, W.I. members presented reports on "Pensions When You Move From Province to Province" and "Wills and Property and Laws

Affecting Women." The topics covered in these papers, particularly those which related to women, suggest that the legal concerns of W.I. members were in step with those of other women's organizations of the period.

Agriculture was a topic dear to the hearts of Women's Institute members since it was the way in which the majority of them earned their livelihoods. All facets of the topic were explored at W.I. meetings. One paper, for example, was entitled "A New Deal for the West"; it dealt with the wheat shortage and expressed the hope that 1937 would be the year of the "grand comeback" for that crop.[28] Another paper centered upon potatoes, how they were discovered, and of what they consisted. After hearing this paper, the members engaged in a discussion of the different methods by which potatoes could be prepared for meals.[29] In order to enhance the monetary gains of farm women, papers were given on "The Care and Feeding of Chickens for Market" and "The Best Way to Keep Cream Cool and in Good Condition for Shipping." Members also were interested in enhancing their homes and, therefore, reports were written on "Horticulture and Beautifying the Home Grounds" and "The Care of House Plants." Other W.I. reports related to agriculture were "Grasshopper Plague in Prairie Provinces" and "The Problems of the Agricultural Fair."

Agriculture was Alberta's primary industry but the local Women's Institutes were interested in other industries as well. A popular paper topic was "Canadian Industries," and one particular version of this paper was on maple syrup. The author felt that Quebec was then producing the superior product.[30] Other papers were written on "Home

Industries," "Natural Resources of Alberta," and the "Manufacture of Armaments." Another popular paper topic was "Alberta Made Goods." One W.I. member described the contents of a paper she had written on that topic:

> One year I was asked to write a paper on Alberta Made Goods. I really enjoyed research, this didn't come hard for me. We had flour mills in Medicine Hat. Pottery was made besides some dishes. Green Houses where flowers were grown and shipped all over, a soap factory, on and on. Lethbridge had its sugar refinery. Soft wheat was milled and made into macaroni. They had their coal and an experimental farm where different varieties of grains and vegetables were grown to see which grew and matured best suited to the climate. Drumheller had huge amounts of hard coal mines everywhere. Strathmore had a large herd of Holstein cows that supplied the dining cars on the C.P.R. with milk. Hives of Bees were kept too. Brooks had its share of vegetables that were canned. There was no such thing as vegetable oils but linseed was made of flax seed, this was used for paint. Agriculture with grain and beef was Alberta's main source of income. There were packing houses in Edmonton and Calgary besides dairies where butter and cheese were made.[31]

The paper in question was read at an A.W.I. provincial convention held in Edmonton where it received an honorable mention. The same member later was asked to provide a display of Alberta Made Goods for a conference at Priddis, Alberta. With the co-operation of the merchants in Cochrane, she was able to include samples of pastries, bread, cheese, cereals, cold cuts, and jars of jellies, jams, and pickles. Those attending the conference were invited to munch their way through the display and, not surprisingly, it was a huge success.[32] The whole point behind writing papers and making displays on Alberta Made Goods was to create an awareness among W.I. members and their families to look for and buy Alberta products.

Many of the reports written by W.I. members dealt with history. Some were on the particular community in which a W.I. was located, such as "Early Days in Langdon" and "Local History of Langdon." Often a local W.I. would elect to do a series of papers throughout a given year on one theme. For example, a series was done on the provinces of Canada with members preparing a report on a different province each month.[33] Another series was done on "My Native Land" by members who were born in various countries.[34] There also were papers on "Valentine Customs in Other Countries," "Irish Customs and Superstitions," "Easter," "Empire Day," and "National Holidays." Other papers of an historical nature were "Our Flag and What it Stands For," "The History of the Red Cross," and the "Life of Queen Alexandra." Mrs. Catherine Neil wrote a paper entitled "Pioneer Days" which recounted her life as a Scottish woman who came to Canada in 1905 as the bride of a sheep rancher and the hardships, griefs, and joys which she experienced on the prairies. Mrs. Neil first gave this paper in 1924, and by the request of her Institute, she gave it again in 1938.[35]

Finally, a host of papers were written by members of local Women's Institutes on topics that different members happened to be interested in and wished to share with others. Among these types of papers were the "Evils of Fault Finding," "The Modern Girl" written in 1925, "The Proposed New Calendar," "Modern Fashions" written in 1931, "Leauge of Nations," "Childhood Days in Ireland," "What is Your Philosophy of Life?" "Bird's Eye View of the International Situation," "How to Welcome our Friends," "The Preservation of Wild Birds and Animals," "What the Institutes are Doing," the "Necessity for Social Life in the Country" written in 1922, and "Homemade Whitewash." The diversity of these topics was evidence of the multiplicity of interests held by the membership of the Women's Institutes. The fact that these women were motivated to write reports on various topics and then present them to the other members illustrates the way in which rural women were able to add to the knowledge of one another through utilizing the opportunity for internal interaction which was presented by the Women's Institutes.

To this point we have outlined two major ways in which Women's Institutes made a conscious effort to educate their members. One was through the establishment of 'Education' or 'Standing Committees' to which different members were elected for one year terms. Another major method of education was the writing of reports by individual members for presentation to the local group. A number of these papers were related to the Education Committees, others were not. In general, the paper subjects included food and nutrition, homemaking, sanitation and health, education, legislation, agriculture, industry, history, and topics of general interest. There were additional methods by which Women's Institutes chose to enhance and further the education of their members. These included demonstrations, lectures, talks, and short courses. Again, as with the paper topics, a number of the subjects in these presentations were related to the Education Committees; in fact, many were organized by the education conveners.

Demonstrations were popular events at Women's Institute meetings with many locals planning for at least one demonstration per year. A topic which lent well to demonstration purposes was the preparation of various foods. Government demonstrators often visited locals to instruct the members in such things as how to prepare poultry. In

1929, the Langdon W.I. had a demonstration on baking angel food cakes,[36] and the Gordon W.I., in 1940, had a similar demonstration entitled "Angel Food and Walnut Sponge Cakes."[37] There also were demonstrations on icing cakes, and making sugar, potato salad, candy, tea biscuits, cheese, and even noodles. Other demonstrations centered upon cooking implements. For example, there were demonstrations on how to make a fireless cooker, how to use a pressure cooker, and how to cook with paper bags. A stuffed fish was baked in the paper bag demonstration and after the meeting, the Lea Park members were joined by the U.F.A. in time to partake of the fish which "all voted a success."[38] Mr. Roux of Calgary visited the Langdon W.I. in 1936 to give a canning demonstration. He did meat in tin cans, which he then processed for three hours, and he also brought along peas and beans which had been canned previously. This demonstration was well attended with fifteen members and fifteen visitors present; the peas and beans were sampled for lunch. Mr. Roux offered the W.I. the use of the canning machine for six months and the offer was accepted.[39]

The food demonstrations were extremely important to the Women's Institute members both from the standpoint of nutrition as well as the fact that they gave the women ways of providing variety in the meals that they prepared for their families. Further, many W.I. members were new to rural life, so while they grew ample food to feed their families, this food would be spoiled over the winter months unless these women learned proper preservation techniques. By providing this type of information, demonstrations proved most useful in helping women to cope with rural life. Mrs. Rogers, in addition to serving as secretary-treasurer of the A.W.I. from 1916 to 1926 and vice-president from 1929 to 1932, also held the position of president in two local Women's Institutes, the Fort Saskatchewan branch and the Edmonton branch. She described the value of demonstrations in the following way:

> Now a lot of the war brides that came out after the First War had never been on a farm. They didn't know the first thing about making butter, or making bread. Well, somebody would show them. They'd have a demonstration. They'd make bread or butter at the meeting--and then these women would say "Well, I'll try that"--and gradually got to learn how to do these things--and took a pride in doing it. Of course, a lot of those English women--they could do all sorts of needlework, better than some of our other people could and they just sort of traded information.
>
> --Mrs. Rogers
> Interview, 1974.[40]

Mrs. Rogers' statement underlined yet another important aspect of the educational process of the Women's Institutes, which was that the members educated each other.

Needlework was one of the many handicrafts that were demonstrated at local W.I. meetings. Other handicraft demonstrations were held on flower gilding, rug-making, easily made Christmas presents from inexpensive materials and leftovers, hemstitching, and embroidery on flour sacks. There were clothing related demonstrations on home dress making; the Warspite W.I. had demonstrations on how to mend the heels of silk stockings and how to make mittens from stocking tops.[41] The Rugby W.I. had a demonstration on cleaning clothes with gasoline and Mr. McNair demonstrated how to start a gasoline engine.[42] Mrs. Worall of the Mountain View W.I. stated: "We have had lectures and demonstrations about many things including the proper way to iron a man's shirt. These modern fabrics eliminate much ironing these days."[43]

Improving the home was a topic of special interest to the members of the Westlock W.I.:

> The women obtained ideas through District Home Economists, publications, Alberta College would send out Instructors who would teach sewing, home decorating; we named it and a suitable person would spend a day.
>
> Here I would like to mention there were many immigrants in this part of the country. W.I. members visited them (sometimes communication was difficult) with the hope they would join us. In that way they would get ideas for their homes and we from them.[44]

There also were demonstrations given at various Institutes on First Aid. In 1924, "a district nurse gave a demonstration on how to give a fever bath and how to change a bed with the patient in it" to the Loyalist W.I.[45]

The most formalized method of education utilized by the Women's Institutes was short courses. Some of these courses, particularly the earlier ones, were developed and offered by the Alberta provincial government. Others were written or commissioned by the A.W.I. and offered to those local branches that demonstrated sufficient interest in having them. There were two varieties of courses, those taught by an instructor and those taken by correspondence. A correspondence course in nutrition was prepared by Mrs. J. Macgregor Smith and three graduates in Household Science in the winter of 1933-1934. A total of three hundred copies was sent out each month for six months to those branches which had paid the one dollar fee. At the end of the course there was an examination and diplomas were awarded.[46] In 1935, another correspondence course was arranged. This one was written by Mrs. H. R. Evans of the Primrose W.I. at Innisfree, Alberta. Mrs. Evans was a nurse and the course which she prepared was on home nursing. Each branch that was interested in the course was required to pay a fee of one dollar to cover the costs; one hundred and twenty-five branches availed themselves of this opportunity.[47] The records of the Penhold W.I. indicated that its members took the home nursing course in 1935.[48] An entry in the Langdon W.I. minutes for the meeting of 2 October 1935 stated that a letter had been received from Mrs. Ferguson, the Provincial President announcing, among other things, that a short course in home nursing was being arranged. However, "[after] some discussion, a motion was made by Mrs. Dain, sec. by Mrs. Forster, that we do not have this course. Carried."[49]

The Langdon W.I. also had received a letter from the Home Bureau which was read at the meeting of 17 April 1935. The letter announced that a three day glove making course was available to the branch if they wished to have it; the motion recorded in the minutes indicated that they did not.[50] At a meeting of 14 July 1937, a letter was read from Miss Gordon of the Department of Agriculture which informed the members of a glove making demonstration (rather than a short course) to be held on 26 and 27 August.[51] An entry for 4 August indicated that the demonstration had been cancelled because it was harvest time.[52] A number of short courses actually were taken by the members of the Langdon W.I. On 25, 26, and 27 July 1922 they had a short course in cookery.[53] On 18 April 1934 they received a domestic science correspondence course.[54] This was followed by an examination which four members wrote on 25 April.[55] The following year, on 3 April 1935, the marks from the examination were announced. The four members from the Langdon branch attained marks of 88, 86, 81, and 78; each received a certificate of merit as did the Institute.[56] In 1940 the Langdon W.I. had a series of handicraft lessons held on 3 January, 7 February, 6 March, and 3 April.[57]

Examples of some of the other short courses included dressmaking courses held at the Garrington W.I. in 1929,[58] and at the Boyle W.I. in October 1933,[59] and interior decorating courses at the Garrington and Warspite W.I.s in the 1930s.[60] Members of the Rugby W.I. were most interested in ways of improving the home. One member wrote: "We were fortunate in being near Olds College to give us courses in Nutrition, Gardening, Landscaping, Home Decorating, Colors in Home, Upholstery, etc."[61] The Loyalist W.I. also took advantage of short courses. On 28 February 1918 they had a government short course on home cooking, in November 1924 they had a basketry course, and commencing on 25 December 1924 they had a three day course in millinery.[62]

When members of a local Women's Institute happened to share an interest in a topic it was not uncommon for them to engage the services of a lecturer or speaker who they felt might be capable of lending some insight into the topic. Often a local branch would advertize when a speaker was coming to a district so that the entire community could benefit; "[when] there was enough interest shown a hall was rented and the event took place in the evening so that working people could attend."[63] In 1934 the Langdon W.I. arranged to have a series of speaker presentations and a motion was passed which allowed that these presentations "be open to the men."[64] The first meeting was held on 7 February and featured Mr. J. Strang, a Wheat

Pool Director from Claresholm. He gave a talk on "World Conditions of the Wheat Market" to a crowd of approximately fifty men and women. His talk was followed by a question period during which time the W.I. ladies served tea to all.[65] A second speaker, Rev. Gordon, was invited on 7 March to address ten members and three visitors on the subject of "Capitalism." This "inspiring talk" was "followed by a few minutes discussion" and then tea was served.[66] Col. MacGregor, Inspector of Schools, spoke to an audience of fifteen on "The Mark of an Educated Man." His paper, given on 19 March, was based on a book by the same title. The meeting concluded with tea.[67] On 4 April Mrs. W. W. Rogers of Calgary gave a talk on "The Douglas System of Economics." Her speech was followed by a question period and tea. Eleven members and three visitors were in attendance.[68] The following month, on 2 May, the Langdon W.I. was invited as guests of the Dalemead U.F.W.A. to hear an address on "Peace" by Mrs. Wm. Carson of Calgary. This meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Fulton; a total of twenty-eight women attended.[69] Another speech on the topic of "Peace" was given by Mrs. Ferguson, president of the A.W.I. on 16 May. This meeting was attended by fifteen members and ten visitors.[70]

The Lea Park W.I. was the first branch to organize in Alberta, therefore, its activities were arranged by the members without the aid of the Superintendent of Women's Institutes or the A.W.I. Lea Park set an early precedent of inviting other people to attend meetings at which special lecturers would be present. On 16 February 1910, the U.F.A. of Tring met with the Lea Park W.I. in the afternoon to hear a lecture by Mr. Foley on "Poultry Raising" and a lecture by Dr.

McKercher on "Disease Among Stock." After the lectures a dinner was served and then the members of the two separate organizations repaired to adjoining rooms to conduct meetings. These meetings were brought to a hasty conclusion as the men and women of the two organizations regrouped and passed the evening dancing to Gramophone selections.[71]

At a regular monthly meeting of the Lea Park W.I., held on the afternoon of 4 September 1910, the members listened to an address on "Home-making" by Mr. R. Hurford, student-in-charge of Christ Church, Tring. The principal points of Mr. Hurford's address were recorded in the minutes:

> . . . The shack and its ideal furnishing; housework in all its bearings on the happiness & welfare of the home. Our appearance, which was to be always neat & tidy. Mr. Hurford then spoke of the husband or men folk in the home pointing out their duties and privileges in helping to make things happy and pleasant. The children, their love, obedience & respect to parents & elders, their manners, table & otherwise & methods of improving same was next touched upon. The woman in the home was the next item; her behaviour, duties, etc. were clearly outlined. The subject of money also came into consideration & this interesting address closed by considering the religious side of home life. Prayer, family & individual was to be the rock on which the happiness of the home was founded.[72]

This address was well received by the W.I. members. The speaker for 28 February 1911 was Mr. Goodall who, incidentally, was one of the two male charter members of the Lea Park W.I. The principal point of his presentation was that consolidated schools were preferable to the system which was in place at the time.[73] Mr. Goodall spoke again on the topic of Education in the Rural School on 15 April 1911. The highlights of his address were as follows:

> The present rural school system was considered to be far too expensive considering the work accomplished. A consolidated boarding school was suggested by the speaker as a possible solution of the problem. Irregular attendance was considered

> one of the greatest injuries not only to the pupil but also to all concerned.[74]

The members were so impressed with this presentation that they felt it ". . . should be repeated before a representative audience of the entire district."[75]

Mrs. Graham, the founder of the Lea Park W.I., gave an "instructive address" on turkey raising at the meeting of 10 June 1911:

> The most important reason for raising turkeys was to destroy grasshoppers & other insects. Also that they were a profitable investment. Milk, shoots, & water makes a good diet for young turkeys, and last but not least is the benefit derived by the person attending them, there would be no need of blood tonics.[76]

On 21 December 1912, Mrs. Graham's husband, H. C. Graham, gave an address on the "Benefits of Farmers' Organizations" at a meeting held at the Riverton School in conjunction with the U.F.A.[77]

Members of the Kinsella W.I. invited lecturers to visit their branch in the 1920s. One spoke on the topic of "Thrift," another on "How You Choose and Buy Goods," and yet another gave "Hints on Gardening."[78] A guest speaker from Athabasca spoke to the Boyle W.I. in 1937 on the "Opportunities on Hand for Mothers and Children."[77] The Gordon W.I. had a most interesting speaker visit in 1939:

> At the September meeting, Mrs. David Sinclair of the Little Red Deer Dorcas Society was our guest speaker and gave a heart stirring talk on her early life in Alberta. Mrs. Sinclair came to this part of the country as a girl of seventeen in 1883--the first white woman to live north of Calgary. Her story was presented vividly and was thoroughly enjoyed by all members.[80]

A speaker who always was welcome at the Women's Institute branches was Mrs. Nellie McClung. Her speeches were so well delivered that those W.I. members who had an opportunity to hear her can still recall the event to this day.[81] The Langdon W.I. was extremely fortunate in that Nellie McClung visited that branch three times; first on 15 September 1926 when she spoke on "Current Events"; a second time on 20 June 1928; and a third time on 20 June 1939.[82] Nellie McClung frequently attended the annual conventions of the A.W.I. as a representative of her branch, the Edmonton W.I.

The local Women's Institutes in Alberta entertained a variety of speakers and lecturers throughout the period between 1909 and 1940. The range of topics upon which W.I. members heard presentations indicated that their interests extended far beyond the immediate concerns of the home to include economics, education, agriculture, and a host of other subjects. Other organizations and sometimes the entire community were invited to attend the Women's Institute meetings at which speakers were scheduled to be present. By sharing this means of education with others, the Women's Institutes performed an invaluable service to the community.

Women's Institute members furthered their education through the informal channel of talks, and these were held on a variety of topics. In 1940 the Gordon W.I. featured a talk on current events each month.[83] "Round Table Talks" were introduced into the Garrington W.I. in 1921; at one of the meetings members spoke on carding and spinning wool.[84] The Aldersyde W.I. also had "Round Table Talks"; one in 1930 was on gardening.[85] Other talks were held on insurance, the Medalta potteries at Medicine Hat, and school homework. Miss Lammiman of the Olds Agricultural College led a talk on dressmaking at a meeting of the Burdett W.I. in 1922,[86] and in 1938 the Boyle W.I. had an interesting talk on how to better working conditions for young people.[87] The Garrington W.I. held discussions in 1917 on whether young people on the farm should have pocket money and whether movies have a harmful effect on society.[88] Debates were popular at the meetings of the Warspite W.I. in the 1930s;[89] the Langdon W.I. had a debate on advertizing on 5 September 1934;[90] and Inheritance versus Environment was the title of a debate staged by the Loyalist W.I.[91]

Numerous talks were conducted on the topics of nutrition and health. The Langdon W.I. had a health talk on 20 June 1934 which was organized by the convener of the health committee.[92] A nurse led a discussion on diseases of children at a meeting of the Burdett W.I. in 1922.[93] The Lea Park W.I. discussed the dangers from the fly in 1911:

> The points brought out referred to the filthy habits of the fly and its proven powers as a carrier of disease microbes. The fact that one fly killed before the breeding season means the destruction of two million flies as this number is the offspring in one season of each active fly. Various traps . . . were also discussed and the fact emphasized that dead flies should be burned immediately otherwise the germs and parasites would be transferred to something else. The necessity of the early disposal of manure piles and other hatching and breeding grounds were also brought out also the desirability of good screens kept closed and all food stuffs carefully covered.[94]

This extract from the records of a Lea Park minute book illustrates the quality of some of the discussions had at W.I. meetings. Since "all the members" contributed to this discussion it is evident that they were cognizant with the various ways and means of promoting sanitation and thereby protecting the health of their families. Some discussions were initiated by the presentation of papers or articles. For example, Mrs. Thompson of the Lea Park W.I. read a number of extracts on the topic of eggs, their composition and food value. The members then joined in with a discussion of egg recipes and the various methods of preparing eggs which included "egg in the shell, poached eggs, egg salads, sandwiches, pickled, and omelets." The discussion concluded with a demonstration on bread and cheese omelets by Mrs. Dale.[95] Other discussions of the 1900s were held on jelly making, fruit preserving, pickling, and bread making. There also was a talk staged on the Poultry Marketing Act which was held in 1935.

Another area in which numerous talks were conducted might fit generally into the realm of 'culture'. The following examples of such talks were held by the Langdon W.I. over a period of twelve years: "Character Sketches of Some Great Americans" (18 February 1925), "Mennonites, Hutterites, and Foreigners" (5 May 1926), "Arts and Crafts" (3 November 1926), "A Book Review" (2 October 1929), "Talk and Display on Antiques" (6 November 1929), "Travelogue" (21 October 1931), "Review of a Play" (6 June 1934), and a series of talks on "Know Alberta" in 1937.[96] Edna Jaques, the Canadian poet, was the subject of a talk held on 3 July 1935.[97] Talks were an excellent method by which Women's Institute members were able to enhance the education of one another. Each member added what she knew to a discussion so that by the time each woman had had her turn a substantial amount of information had been compiled and exchanged on a topic. Talks were not simply ways by which W.I. members filled an occasional half hour. In many cases talks were the featured event of a meeting and members were notified of the particular topic to be under discussion well in advance of the date. In this way members were given ample opportunity to do some research on a topic or to formulate a particular viewpoint. Thus, members came to meetings equipped with information that was pertinent to the topic under discussion. Talks also were a means by which even the most timid members could hone their public speaking skills in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

At a time when rural people were isolated and opportunities for social activities were intermittent, reading provided an excellent diversion. The major difficulty stemmed from the fact that there was little in the way of libraries other than the personal collections of some individuals. A number of local Women's Institutes attempted to alleviate this situation by establishing their own libraries. The Burdett W.I. organized a lending library in 1923 with each member donating a book. These books were then loaned out at a cost of ten cents, and the funds were used to buy more books. By 1933 the library was operating out of the town drug store; the collection had reached two hundred and seventy books. In 1941 the books were sold to the members for twenty-five cents each and those not sold were donated to the Colonel Belcher Veterans' Hospital in Calgary.[98] The Penhold W.I. organized the town's first library in 1922.[99] In 1939 the Gordon W.I. started a circulating library with books donated by the members,[100] the Independence W.I. operated a library out of a member's home,[101] and the Warspite W.I. organized a travelling library in the 1920s.[102] Unlike the Burdett W.I., there was no record of these other Institutes having imposed a fee for the loan of books. There was some mention in the Lea Park minutes of starting a library for that Institute, with Miss Humfrey agreeing to make inquiries regarding the Lady Mints Libraries.[103]

Another way in which Women's Institutes obtained the use of libraries was through the Department of Extension at the University of Alberta. The individual Institutes selected the titles they wished to receive and the books were sent almost free of charge. The only costs incurred by the W.I.s were on the return charges for the books.[104] Among those Institutes which made use of the service were Westlock, Munson, Glendale, and Loyalist. In the latter half of the 1930s W.I. members were presented with an additional alternative in library services: the Lady Tweedsmuir Prairie Library. The scheme originated in Calgary in 1936 at an interview conducted between the A.W.I. Council and Lady Tweedsmuir. Queen Mary donated books to the library and the I.O.D.E. in eastern Canada also forwarded a quantity of second-hand books. The practice was to box the books in lots of twenty-five to thirty and send them out to the local Institutes. After paying the transportation charges, the branches were allowed to borrow the books for two to three months.[105] The Boyle, the Kinniburgh, and the Rugby Women's Institutes made use of the Lady Tweedsmuir Prairie Library.[106] Libraries were a significant way in which members of local Women's Institutes managed to continue their education along informal channels. Other rural people who benefited from the W.I. libraries were the families of members and, depending upon how the library facility was organized for a particular branch, the community could benefit too. One member wrote "our men enjoyed this reading matter as much as the ladies."[107]

A major portion of the internal relationships among members of Women's Institutes centered upon educational activities. Members arranged for lecturers to visit their Institutes, demonstrations were featured at meetings, they took short courses, and they held talks. In-between their duties of raising children, maintaining homes, and performing farm chores, members took the time to read a book, or to research and write reports which were presented at meetings. Part of the organization of local branches included the establishment of Education Committees which were chaired by education conveners elected on an annual basis. For the majority of rural women, the organization of the Women's Institutes provided their only opportunity for internal interaction along educational lines. Equally as important, the Institutes were the women's sole opportunity for social activities. In fact, educational and social activities were two major areas of interest to rural women and, therefore, most of the in-house relationships of Women's Institutes revolved around these two interests.

Social Activities of Women's Institutes

The significance of social interaction within the Women's Institutes cannot be over emphasized. Had it not been for the Institutes, the only interaction many rural women in Alberta would have had was with their immediate families. Therefore, the Women's Institute meetings became important events in their lives. Mrs. Rogers, who served for a number of years on the A.W.I. executive, illustrated this point:

> Well, the need was mainly isolation--a place to get together, a place where you could meet people--that had the same interests

> as you had. You must remember that when the Institute started, out here, the people were scattered. Many of them wouldn't see anybody for a week--or longer--and some of them just couldn't take it. That's why so many of them ended up in Ponoka [mental hospital]--just the loneliness. If they had children, it wasn't so bad, but if anybody went to town father went to town . . . . On the other hand, the Institute would never have got very far if it hadn't been for the cooperation of the men . . . . We have pictures of a wagon full of women, all gathered up and being brought in--and it was no "hour meeting"--it was an afternoon. And, you brought the children . . . somebody would take them outside or in another room and entertain them. So, the youngsters liked it too. You might have a Ukrainian here. You might have a Scandinavian here. You might have an American over there--and you didn't have much in common--and the thing was to get a common ground. But of course if they had children--that was a common ground--the care and feeding of children. That was the original start of the Institute.
>
> --Mrs. Rogers
> Interview, 1974.[108]

Women's Institute meetings, then, were one of the few opportunities that a rural woman had to disassociate herself from the immediate confines of her home environment, and spend a few hours pursuing other interests. Hence, these meetings became extremely important to the members as ". . . their only opportunity to share experiences, study and work together on community projects."[109]

An invitation to join a local Women's Institute introduced a whole new aspect to each individual woman's life. Belonging to a Women's Institute meant that she had a support system to depend upon when the hardships of rural life threatened to overwhelm her. The Glendale W.I., for example, formed a significant support system for Mrs. F. C. Hanes. She and her husband had lived at Manyberries, Alberta in the early 1920s, but several years of drought conditions and grasshopper plagues had destroyed all crops and pastures in the area. The situation was so disasterous that the Canadian Pacific

Railway (C.P.R.) offered to relocate farmers into new areas free of charge. In order to alleviate the strain of the immediate situation, Mr. Hanes travelled to High River to earn some money by threshing. During a wet spell in which the machinery was shut down, Mr. Hanes decided to travel further north, to Cochrane, Alberta, where he learned that there was a quarter section for rent. The Hanes family took advantage of the relocation scheme and moved to Cochrane. Mrs. Hanes recalled their arrival:

> I was in my early twenties when we came to farm in the Glendale district 6 miles east of Cochrane. We arrived the first week of Dec. 1924. It was mild then with little snow, but soon winter set in for keeps with the Temp. going down below 50 degrees. With 3 little children I was bushed as I had not met the neighborhood people nor was I able to go out.[110]

At the time of the move, Mrs. Hanes was twenty-one. Her three little children included a daughter who had turned one in September, and twin girls of six weeks. The twins had been born prematurely at seven months assisted by a midwife. Needless to say, the majority of hours in Mrs. Hanes' day were devoted to the care of her children. The formation of a local W.I. branch was a most welcome relief to her:

> It was May 1925 when I was asked to the first meeting of the Glendale Women's Institute, there could have been 10 or 12 farm women young and old. I was so shy I couldn't remember their names. What I did enjoy was the lunch--there was a rule no one could outdo their neighbor by putting on a banquet as only 3 articles of food was allowed. Getting out to the meetings held in the homes once a month was something for me to look forward to, have my hair washed and get dressed up.
>
> I didn't take the children to all of them, when my husband was home he was good to look after them. It was a case of ride horse back or drive a team on a buggy. I soon got acquainted, the ladies liked the children--they were like all other kids--got into mischief sometimes.
>
> It wasn't long until I was asked to help or take my turn having a meeting, all this was good, I felt I was needed.[111]

It was this sense of being needed, of actually belonging to the group, that caused the Women's Institutes to be so successful in Alberta. All rural women in a district were made to feel welcome, not as guests or outsiders, but as useful members of the group. Further, Mrs. Hanes mentioned that ". . . the going wasn't all that great for me when our children were small,"[112] and in this she voiced the sentiments of a multitude of rural women. A young mother with three small children was bound to become discouraged, but at a Women's Institute meeting she would realize that she was not alone. She would be with others who had gone through, or were in the process of going through, the same thing. Thus, there was a spirit of empathy at meetings as well as an opportunity to forget one's difficulties for a few hours.

The Glendale W.I. was but one example of an Institute forming the social life for the women of a district; the other Women's Institutes in the province performed a similar function. For most rural women, a W.I. meeting was the single social event of their month; it was not something they would readily forego. A member of the Garrington W.I. recalled the extent to which the women were willing to go in order to attend a W.I. function:

> Most of the ladies had long distances to go to the meetings. They went by team and wagon, walked, rode horseback and in the winter took hot rocks along in the sleighs for their feet. When they went to conventions and Conference they hired a truck from one who was lucky enough to own one and packing their lunches they were off in clouds of dust or pelting rain (there were no gravel roads in those days).[113]

The ladies of the Garrington W.I. were not engaging in particularly unique behavior, this was happening on a regular basis across the province. The members of the Kircaldy W.I. were equally as determined to attend their meetings: ". . . it was not an uncommon sight to see a member riding to a meeting on horseback, cake in hand."[114]

Members of the provincial organization, the A.W.I., often visited the local branches in order to deliver speeches and strengthen the network. The conditions of travel were even more difficult for these officers because they had to travel greater distances than local members. Some idea of the conditions may be gathered from the following:

> There were difficulties and hardships of travel in those early days of W.I. work. In spite of mud and snow, washouts and muskegs, with ferries in and out of the rivers so that sometimes the visitor was obliged to cross on the cable in the 'cradle' with the mail, just as 'His Majesty's Mail' must go on, the W.I. visitor did likewise, never missing a meeting though sometimes the speaker was a little late in arriving. There was scarcely a cow-path but was covered by one or other of these officers.[115]

The fact that women were willing to cope with any number of inconveniences in order to attend a W.I. meeting serves as an indication of just how significant this organization was to their lives. The social need of rural women was great, their struggle with loneliness and isolation was a constant factor in their lives. Inevitably, however, there were occasions within every year when meetings were cancelled or quorums not met because of the elements. Minute books are peppered with entries of "no meeting," "big snow storm," "bad weather," "cold windy day," and "prairie fire." Another reason why meetings were cancelled was the threat of various diseases. The Loyalist W.I. was unable to hold meetings from October 1918 to January 1919 because a flu epidemic had debilitated the district.[116] Similarly, a flu epidemic raged through the Garrington district in 1920, a whooping cough epidemic in 1922, and a measles epidemic broke out in July 1926.[117]

Social activities at Women's Institute meetings were attuned to the wishes of the membership. All branches featured some sort of social activity at every meeting; this usually took the form of Roll Call. In addition, some branches opted for alternate meetings to be strictly social, or to have one social meeting per month. It depended upon the individual Institute, and even within an Institute the frequency of social activities varied from year to year according to the wishes of the membership. Roll Call was a regular event at each meeting. The topic was selected well in advance so that members had an opportunity to ponder their response. If a member chose not to respond to a Roll Call, that was her prerogative but sometimes, for fun, she had to pay a small fine. Some of the Roll Calls featured at the Aldersyde W.I. in 1924 were "a laundry hint," "a household suggestion," "tell a joke," and "my favorite home dye." In 1930 the Roll Calls were "how to improve our Institute," "hints for house cleaning," "economical labor saving device," "a popular song," "current events," "name and specimen of wild flowers of Alberta," "a pickling recipe," "Sing, say or 5 cents pay," "peace suggestions," and "suggestions for 1931 program."[118] Some of the Roll Calls for the Boyle W.I. were "exchanging hints on gardening," "a poem about Mother's Day," "present a paper on how to spend January evenings," and "tell an Irish joke" with a five cent fine for those failing to respond.[119]

Roll Calls were extremely popular among the membership of the Langdon W.I.; there was a different one featured at every meeting of the 1920s and 1930s. Since the Institute met twice a month there were some twenty-four Roll Calls within every year. Some of the Roll Calls for 1922 included "children's witty sayings," "why I prefer the country or city," "patriotic quotations," "your worst fault," "favorite Canadian authors of fiction," "your favorite song," and "why I married my husband."[120] The Roll Calls for 1926 featured a story theme. They included "animal stories," "stories of adventure," "fairy stories," "Indian stories," "humorous stories," "stories in dialect," "cowboy stories," "stories of royalty," and "stories about women."[121] A sampling of some of the Roll Calls of the early 1930s include "pure gold or dross in magazines," "foods we dislike," "obscure towns in Alberta and their location," (1930), "quotations from Irish authors," "April Fool jokes," "unusual dreams," "Thanksgiving verses from the Bible," (1931), "Canadian products I use," "pet superstitions," "Bible verses about giving," (1932), "words used incorrectly," "items of interest about Alberta women," "mistakes I have made," "why mothers turn gray," and "making pin money," (1933).

Another form of social activity was competitions. A fairly common one was to divide the members into two groups, with each member receiving points for punctuality, attendance, Roll Call, soliciting new members, or bringing visitors to meetings. At the end of the year the points were tabulated and the losers had to entertain the winners. The Garrington and the Gordon W.I.s staged this competition in 1937 and 1938 respectively.[122] A variation on this competition was to hold it on an individual basis rather than teams. At the end of the year a prize might be awarded to the member attending the most meetings, as was done at the Aldersyde W.I. in 1930. The Aldersyde W.I. also staged a spelling match in June and an ankle competition in July of the same year.[123] Debates were a popular form of competition; in 1932 the Boyle W.I. challenged the Ball Club to a debate and won.[124] Usually competitions were staged on a team rather than on an individual basis, and they were intended as a means of enjoyment.

The Roll Calls and the competitions were examples of social activities that were held for the benefit of the members themselves. It is for this reason that these activities are classified as forming part of the internal interaction of Women's Institutes in Alberta. A number of other social activities were staged by the Women's Institutes and, like the Roll Calls and competitions, many of them were for the benefit of the members. However, the local Women's Institutes also provided the social life for many rural communities. Since these activities were for the benefit of people outside the membership, they have been classified as a part of the external interaction of Women's Institutes which are dealt with in the following chapter. Thus, while the number and variety of social activities held by Women's Institutes for the membership were considerable, they formed only half the scenario. There also were a great number of social activities to which entire communities were invited.

In addition to the Roll Calls and the competitions, there were a number of other social activities which the local Women's Institutes held for their membership. The types of activities held at each local Institute were dependent upon the preferences of the members. At the annual conventions and district conferences of Institutes, representatives reported on what their Institutes were doing in the way of social activities; in this way ideas were exchanged and brought back to the local Institutes for the members to consider. The following is a sampling of some of the social activities held by various local Women's Institutes. The Aldersyde W.I. held a variety of social activities. In 1924 they had a husbands' afternoon and a grandmothers' day with old time songs and stories. In 1930, they held a St. Valentine's party at which they entertained their husbands, in March there was a draw for a Pollyanna (secret friend), in June there was a party and birthday cake to celebrate the sixteenth anniversary of the Institute, in September they entertained the Dinton Institute, and in October there was a social meeting in charge of the unmarried members. Everyone came in a hard time costume and the member in the best costume won a prize.[125] The Burdett W.I., in the 1930s, designated every other meeting as a social at which they played Court Whist.[126] The Falun W.I., also in the 1930s, had one social evening per month. The entertainment varied to include debates, card parties, barn dances, dramatics, and ball games. In addition, there were raffles of quilts, fruit cakes, and pictures, with tickets sold at ten cents apiece.[127]

The Garrington W.I., in 1917, made quilts and articles of sewing and knitting which they then sold as a means of raising funds for the Institute. By 1920, the women listened to Gramophone music while they did their quilting.[128] In the late 1920s the Glendale W.I. began holding card parties as a form of social activity.[129] The members of the Gordon W.I. were particularly interested in sewing. In 1938 they decided that alternate meetings would include either Roll Call, one paper, one Round Table talk, and sewing, or Roll Call and straight sewing. In 1940 they agreed to raffle a mystery box at each meeting, and in June of that year sixteen members entertained eighteen visitors including the Dancing Daisies Girls' Club.[130] The Independence W.I. held showers for those couples who married in the 1930s.[131] In 1923 the Langdon W.I. entertained the Cheadle Club at one meeting and the I.O.O.F. at another; they took a "mentality test" in September. The Institute also held special Irish, Valentine, Mother's Day, Hallowe'en, and Victoria Day socials throughout the 1920s, as well as musical programmes, garden parties, box socials, and card parties.[132] The Loyalist W.I. made quilts which they donated to the Wood's Home, and they held card parties and Silver teas for the members. The Munson W.I. held special fun meetings of picnics, entertaining husbands, and going to the show.[133] In the 1920s the Warspite W.I. enjoyed community singsongs; the favorites were "Paddle Your Own Canoe," "Old Folks at Home," and "The Maple Leaf." In the 1930s they held quilt raffles and welcomed new brides to the district.[134]

Social activities were an important aspect of the internal activities of Women's Institutes in Alberta. These activities were quite diverse and were staged on a regular basis. A majority of rural women would have found it quite unbearable even to consider not belonging to the Women's Institute in their district. That organization provided their only social life and it was their principal link with other women. The educational activities of Women's Institutes provided mental stimulation; the social activities, perhaps more importantly, contributed to mental health.

In analyzing Women's Institutes as educational and social institutions it was necessary to focus upon evidence that specifically supported these claims. This approach precluded the possibility of considering the activities of Women's Institutes in their entirety. Yet the entire picture is important in placing the social and educational activities of Women's Institutes within the context of their occurrence. A programme of a local Women's Institute will, therefore, be presented as illustrative of the activities of all Women's Institutes within a typical year. Local branches of Women's Institutes met on a regular basis either once or twice a month, depending upon the wishes of the membership. Meetings were held in the afternoon and ran anywhere from two and one-half to three hours, or even longer. Members usually took turns holding the meetings at their homes, however, some Institutes met at schools, halls, or clubhouses. At the opening of every meeting the members rose and recited, from memory, the W.I. Creed and the Flag Salute. The following is the programme of the Langdon Women's Institute for 1922:

> Meetings: 1st and 3rd Wednesday from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
> President: Mrs. M. Brown
>
> January 4
> Hostesses--Mrs. J. Whitney and Mrs. G. Whitney
> Business Meeting
> Roll Call.
>
> January 18
> Hostesses--Mrs. W. Allcock and Mrs. R. Dye
> "Co-operation between Home and School" (Paper by Miss Jean McWilliams)
> Roll Call. Children's witty sayings.
>
> February 1
> Business meeting in hall
> Roll Call. Current events.
>
> February 15
> Hostesses--Mrs. Armstrong and Mrs. Scott
> Paper--"Necessity for Social Life in the Country"--Mrs. H. Dain
> Roll Call. Why I prefer the country or city.

March 1
Hostesses--Mrs. Henderson and Mrs. Colwell
Business meeting
Roll Call. Amusing anecdote.

March 15
Hostesses--Mrs. Tarrant and Mrs. Forgie
Poultry demonstration (Government demonstrator)
Roll Call. Favorite breeds of poultry and why.

April 5
Hostesses--Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Gray
Business meeting
Roll Call. Patriotic quotations.

April 19
Hostesses--Mrs. McIntyre and Mrs. Lewis, Sr.
Paper--"Principles of Good Health and How to Observe Them"--
Mrs. Gray
Roll Call. Favorite flower and why.

May 3
Hostesses--Mrs. Snider and Mrs. F. Fulton
Business meeting
Roll Call. Suggestions for Annual Picnic.

May 17
Hostesses--Mrs. Griffis and Mrs. Jessey
Paper--"Evils of Fault Finding"--Mrs. Lewis
Roll Call. Your worst fault.

June 7
Hostesses--Mrs. L. Lewis and Mrs. Bishop
Business meeting
Roll Call.

June 21
Hostesses--Mrs. Moe and Miss Robertson
Paper--"Books for the Home Library"--Mrs. Jessey
Roll Call. Favorite Canadian authors of fiction.

July 14
Hostesses--Mrs. Dain and Mrs. Buntain
Convention Report--Mrs. Moe
Roll Call. Suggestions for improving the meetings.

July 25th, 26th, 27th
Short course in Cookery--Miss Luttaby, demonstrator.

August 2
Hostess--Mrs. J. T. McIntyre
Paper: "Cutting the Grocery Bill"--by Mrs. Cowen

Roll Call. Economical Helps.

August 17
Annual Picnic.

September 6
Hostess--Mrs. Bittle
Musical afternoon
Roll Call. Your favorite song.

September 20
Hostess--Mrs. F. M. Lewis
Study of map of Alberta
Roll Call. Your favorite school day poem.

October 4
Hostess--Mrs. Cowen
Making Artificial Flowers
Roll Call. Why I married my Husband.

October 18
Hostess--Mrs. McNeil
Paper: "Co-operation Between Home and School"
Roll Call. Simple Remedies for Simple Ailments.

November 1
Hostess--Mrs. Stevens
Discussion. Sensible Christmas Giving
Roll Call. Christmas suggestions.

November 15
Hostess--Mrs. J. F. McLeod
Business meeting
Roll Call. Suggestions for the new program.

December 6
Annual meeting
Roll Call. Payment of Dues.[135]

The example cited above illustrates the way in which the social and educational elements were integrated into an annual programme. It is evident that the meetings were well organized, with a major activity planned for each one. Members took turns acting as hostesses at meetings. This usually entailed providing a light dinner or tea which the members enjoyed at the end of every meeting. In this way, each woman was given the opportunity to entertain her friends, try new recipes, and prepare dainty meals.

Evidence based upon some twenty-eight Women's Institutes has illustrated that in the period between 1909 and 1940, the internal activities and relationships of Women's Institutes were of an educational and social nature. The A.W.I., as the central provincial organization, encouraged these activities both through example and through contact by A.W.I. officers with the local branches. In this way, Women's Institutes in Alberta helped to diminish the isolation and loneliness of rural women. Women's Institutes also aided the communities in which they were situated, and it is this aspect of their activities and relationships that is the subject of the next chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 17, 18, 19 February 1915.

[2] Ibid., Meeting of 1 and 2 March 1916.

[3] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 9.

[4] Club Women's Creed

Keep us, O Lord, from pettiness; let us be large in thought, in word and deed.

Let us be done with fault-finding and leave off self-seeking.

May we put away all pretence and meet each other face to face without self-pity and without prejudice.

May we never be hasty in judgment and always generous.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses, straightforward and unafraid.

Let us take time for all things, make us grow calm, serene, gentle.

Grant that we may realize that it is the little things that create differences; that in the big things of life we are one.

And may we strive to touch and know the great human heart common to us all; and, O Lord God, let us not forget to be kind.

(A.W.I., Report of the Alberta Women's Institutes, 1961-63, p. 5).

[5] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 14, 15, 16 March 1917.

[6] Ibid., Meeting of 9, 10, 11 March 1918.

[7] Ibid., Meeting of 16 May 1917.

[8] Ibid., Meeting of 6 November 1917.

[9] Ibid., Meeting of 8 November 1917.

[10] Ibid., Meeting of 14 November 1917.

[11] Ibid., Meeting of 9, 10, 11 March 1918.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., Meeting of 11, 12, 13, 14 March 1919.

[14] Ibid., Meeting of 16, 17, 18, 19 March 1920.

[15] Ibid.

[16] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 20.

[17] Other local Women's Institutes in Alberta that were formed prior to 1940 include the Hughenden W.I., the Eagle Valley W.I., the Duffield W.I., the Wetaskiwin W.I., the Echo Hill W.I., the Red Deer W.I., the Grimshaw W.I., the Onoway W.I., the Grande Prairie W.I., the Berwyn W.I., the Fort Saskatchewan W.I., the Erskine W.I., the Cottonwood W.I., the Primrose W.I., the Raymond W.I., the Cowley W.I., the Sounding Creek W.I. (renamed the Youngstown W.I.), the Highway W.I., the Wabamun W.I., the Delia W.I., and the Lougheed W.I.

[18] Mrs. Charlotte Stange, Falun W.I., personal letter, 20 December 1982.

[19] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[20] Langdon W.I. Programme 1934.

[21] Mrs. Alice Zeeb, Secretary, Walsh W.I., personal letter, 6 December 1982.

[22] Mrs. Marjory Smith, Penhold W.I., personal letter, 11 February 1983.

[23] Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter, 6 January 1983.

[24] Mrs. Gladys A. Doherty, Westlock W.I., personal letter, 21 January 1983.

[25] Mrs. F. C. Hanes, From Mrs. Gertie Hawkwood, Glendale W.I., personal letter, 29 December 1982.

[26] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[27] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 February 1909 to 11 March 1911, Meeting of 12 December 1910.

[28] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country" by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[29] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 February 1909 to 11 March 1911, Meeting of 11 March 1911.

[30] The paper was written in 1934. Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[31] Mrs. F. C. Hanes. From Mrs. Gertie Hawkwood, Glendale W.I., personal letter, 29 December 1982.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Langdon W.I. Programme 1930.

[34] Mrs. Lillian Hansen, Munson W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[35] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country" by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[36] Langdon W.I. Programme 1929 (18 September).

[37] Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983.

[38] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 11 March 1911 to 21 December 1912, Meeting of 9 March 1912.

[39] Langdon Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 January 1934 to 1 December 1937, Meeting of 15 April 1936.

[40] Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage, and Anne Wheeler, eds., A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1976), p. 128.

[41] These demonstrations were held in the 1930s. "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981" (pamphlet).

[42] Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood, Rugby W.I., personal letter, 8 January

1983.

[43] Mrs. J. Worrall, Mountain View W.I., personal letter, April 1983.

[44] Mrs. Gladys A. Doherty, Westlock W.I., personal letter, 21 January 1983.

[45] The demonstration was held on 24 August 1924. Mrs. Rebecca Olson, Loyalist W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[46] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 20.

[47] Ibid., p. 21.

[48] Mrs. Marjory Smith, Penhold W.I., personal letter, 11 February 1983.

[49] Langdon Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 January 1934 to 1 December 1937, Meeting of 2 October 1935.

[50] Ibid., Meeting of 17 April 1935.

[51] Ibid., Meeting of 14 July 1937.

[52] Ibid., Meeting of 4 August 1937.

[53] Langdon W.I. Programme 1922 (25, 26, 27 April).

[54] Langdon W.I. Programme 1934 (18 April).

[55] Langdon Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 January 1934 to 1 December 1937, Meeting of 18 April 1934.

[56] Ibid., 3 April 1934.

[57] Langdon W.I. Programme 1940.

[58] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[59] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[60] "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981," (pamphlet).

[61] Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood, Rugby W.I., personal letter, 8 January 1983.

[62] Mrs. Rebecca Olson, Loyalist W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[63] Mrs. Gladys A. Doherty, Westlock W.I., personal letter, 21 January 1983.

[64] Langdon Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 January 1934 to 1 December 1937, Meeting of 3 January 1934.

[65] Ibid., Meeting of 7 February 1934.

[66] Ibid., Meeting of 7 March 1934.

[67] Ibid., Meeting of 19 March 1934.

[68] Ibid., Meeting of 4 April 1934.

[69] Ibid., Meeting of 2 May 1934.

[70] Ibid., Meeting of 16 May 1934.

[71] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 February 1909 to 11 March 1911, Meeting of 16 February 1910.

[72] Ibid., Meeting of 4 September 1910.

[73] Ibid., Meeting of 28 February 1911.

[74] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 11 March 1911 to 21 December 1912, Meeting of 15 April 1911.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid., Meeting of 10 June 1911.

[77] Ibid., Meeting of 21 December 1912.

[78] Mary Lancaster, Kinsella W.I., personal letter, 17 December 1982.

[79] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[80] Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983.

[81] Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood, Rugby W.I., personal letter, 8 January 1983.

[82] Langdon W.I. Programmes 1926, 1928, 1939.

[83] Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983.

[84] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.) personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[85] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[86] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country," by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[87] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[88] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[89] "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981" (pamphlet).

[90] Langdon W.I. Programme 1934 (5 September).

[91] Mrs. Rebecca Olson, Loyalist W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[92] Langdon W.I. Programme 1934 (20 June).

[93] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country," by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[94] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 February 1909 to 11 March 1911, Meeting of 5 May 1909.

[96] Langdon W.I. Programmes 1925, 1926, 1929, 1931, 1934, and 1937.

[97] Langdon Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 January 1934 to 1 December 1937, Meeting of 3 July 1935.

[98] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country," by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[99] Mrs. Marjory Smith, Penhold W.I., personal letter, 11 February 1983.

[100] Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983.

[101] Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter, 6 January 1983.

[102] "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981" (pamphlet).

[103] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 11 March 1911 to 21 December 1912, Meeting of 15 April 1911.

[104] Mrs. Gladys A. Doherty, Westlock W.I., personal letter, 21 January 1983.

[105] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," pp. 27-28.

[106] Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood of the Rugby W.I. commented that the Tweedsmuir histories encouraged a number of people to write pioneer histories. The one written by the Rugby W.I. was entitled "History of Another Era." Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood, Rugby W.I., personal letter, 8 January 1983.

[107] Mrs. F. C. Hanes. From Mrs. Gertie Hawkwood, Glendale W.I., personal letter, 29 December 1982.

[108] Rasmussen, Rasmussen, Savage, and Wheeler, eds., A Harvest Yet to Reap, p. 130.

[109] Mrs. Jean Scobie, Secretary, Kirkcaldy W.I., personal letter, 26 November 1982.

[110] Mrs. F. C. Hanes. From Mrs. Gertie Hawkwood, Glendale W.I.,

personal letter, 29 December 1982.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[114] Mrs. Jean Scobie, Secretary, Kirkcaldy W.I., personal letter, 26 November 1982.

[115] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 12.

[116] Mrs. Rebecca Olson, Loyalist W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[117] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[118] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[119] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[120] Langdon W.I. Programme 1922.

[121] Langdon W.I. Programme 1926.

[122] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983, and Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983.

[123] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[124] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[125] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[126] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country," by

Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[127] Mrs. Charlotte Stange, Falun W.I., personal letter, 20 December 1982.

[128] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[129] Mrs. Gertie Hawkwood, Glendale W.I., personal letter, 29 December 1982.

[130] Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983.

[131] Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter, 6 January 1983.

[132] Langdon W.I. Programmes 1922 to 1929.

[133] Mrs. Lillian Hansen, Munson W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[134] "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981," (pamphlet).

[135] Langdon W.I. Programme 1922.

CHAPTER V

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

In the previous chapter Women's Institutes were considered within the context of their internal activities and relationships. An equally significant facet of Women's Institutes was the way in which they interacted with those outside the movement, particularly in their activities and relationships with individuals and communities. W.I.s at the provincial and local levels were active in the realms of schooling, war work, aid to victims, medical facilities, social events, the erection of community buildings, work with young girls, among others. Also significant was the relationship between Women's Institutes and the Alberta provincial government. Each of these areas, therefore, will be dealt with in this chapter.

W.I.s and Schools

An area of external interaction in which Women's Institutes dedicated a considerable portion of their time was the education of school age children. The membership became involved in the rural school system in a variety of ways. As early as 1918, the A.W.I. passed a resolution requesting that the provincial government provide free scholarships for the pupils of rural and consolidated schools to attend the Schools of Agriculture in the province. The scholarships were to be awarded by the board of Education on the basis of term work and standings in examinations.[1] At the A.W.I. convention in 1919, a similar resolution was again passed.[2] While the Women's Institutes did act in the capacity of pressure groups, they also were prepared to take action on their own. Both the Munson and the Kinniburgh W.I.s established scholarship funds in the 1920s for the children in their districts.[3] Other local Institutes, such as the Boyle W.I., contributed funds toward various agricultural scholarships from time to time. The district organizations of the Alberta Women's Institute began offering scholarships in the sum of fifty dollars in 1927. These scholarships were awarded annually to girls in their first year at the Schools of Agriculture and were granted on the basis of grades, extra curricular activities, and general character. The scholarship was awarded on the condition that the recipient returned to the School of Agriculture to complete the second year of her programme. In 1936 these scholarships were paid out of the general funds of the A.W.I. treasury.[4]

In addition to providing scholarships to school age children, the Women's Institutes maintained a close surveillance of the curricula in rural schools. The A.W.I. passed a resolution in 1920 that ". . . special stress be laid on the subjects of English, Composition, Writing, Spelling, and Elementary Arithmetic in the Public Schools."[5] The views of the Women's Institutes regarding school curricula were not unwelcome to the provincial government. In fact, the views of the Women's Institutes were solicited by the Minister of Education. An A.W.I. resolution was passed in 1920 recommending that a portion of the year be devoted to the study of school curricula with a view to offering practical recommendations to the Minister of Education.[6]

Another resolution was passed by the A.W.I. which asked that ". . . the Department of Education appoint women School Inspectors from the ranks of women School Teachers especially those with experience and efficiency in primary work."[7] The effect of the interaction of the Women's Institutes in the realm of education was that they provided a forum for the expression of educational interests on behalf of rural women and the rural community. A number of the members, particularly the leaders, had themselves been school teachers, and this lent considerable credence to their recommendations.[8]

A number of local branches of Women's Institutes sponsored either partially or wholly, the annual school fairs in their districts. The Loyalist W.I. contributed by raising funds; in 1921 this was done by holding a pie social.[9] Prizes for the annual school fairs were provided by the Veteran W.I.,[10] and cocoa was donated annually for school fairs by the Langdon W.I.[11] The Mountain View W.I. sponsored the district school fair for several years. Fair day featured exhibits of livestock, grains, baking, school work, and there were sporting events.[12] From 1916 to 1923, the Walsh W.I. held an annual children's fair. Every spring this W.I. distributed garden seeds and eggs to school children. In the fall the garden plots were inspected and exhibitions were held of the produce as well as of school work, sewing, and baking. The Walsh W.I. members provided "useful prizes" for the winners.[13] Commencing in 1923, the Kinniburgh W.I. began holding an annual children's day and fair. Judging was done in classes of sewing, baking, carpentry, flowers and vegetables; there were recitations and songs; games were played and races run. The Institute awarded prizes in each category. This annual event continued for several years.[14]

The Christmas season was made more festive for school children through the efforts of the Women's Institutes. Teachers in rural schools received assistance from the W.I.s in organizing annual Christmas concerts and parties; a number of the Institutes made a special effort to ensure that every child in their district received a gift at Christmas. The Aldersyde W.I. donated oranges and candy for Christmas concerts and they held parties for the children in the district.[15] The members of the Munson W.I. organized the first Christmas entertainment and treats for the children of the district. This annual affair was continued for several years until the schools and churches began holding regular Christmas concerts.[16] During the depression years, members of the Garrington W.I. began to make donations for school children at Christmas. In 1932 they gave the children popcorn, and in 1934 they distributed Christmas presents to one hundred and twenty children in the district.[17] The Rugby W.I. participated with the Recreation Society in hosting Christmas programmes and providing treats for children.[18] Every preschooler was remembered by the Gordon W.I. with a gift at Christmas, every child in the district received a bag of candy, and a gift was provided for the teacher.[19] The Glendale and the Langdon W.I.s were among the other branches that donated gifts for the children at school Christmas concerts.[20] Women's Institutes provided other festivities for rural children throughout any given year. The Veteran W.I., for example, sponsored an annual Ice Carnival for children.[21] The Burdett W.I. hosted Hallowe'en parties for children; this event continued annually for twenty-seven years.[22]

Various contests were introduced into the schools by the Women's Institutes. Some contests were designed to develop certain skills in pupils. The oration contest, instigated in 1921 by the Munson W.I., was one such example. Both village and rural children were invited to participate in competing for the oration cup supplied by the Institute. This contest was discontinued after 1929 when the Drumheller Musical Festival, which also featured elocution, began to attract the time and interest of the pupils.[23] Prizes were donated yearly by the Independence W.I. to winners in several contests including essays, elocution, and attendance. These contests were between four different schools in the area: Bamill, Independence, Alcomdale, and Kingsley. One year the Institute awarded a swing to the Independence school for having the best attendance of the four schools.[24] The Loyalist W.I. gave prizes to school children who collected the most gopher tails. In 1919 the awards were: first prize $2.50, second prize $1.50, and third prize $1.00. In 1921 the prizes for gopher tails were six dollars to the girls and six dollars to the boys.[25] For many years the Garrington W.I. gave prizes for children's gardens. In the 1930s the Institute began awarding prizes for children's flower bouquets. Flower seeds were purchased for the children by the Institute, and in August the children presented their bouquets in a flower show. In 1931, each child bringing a bouquet received two cents; the following year this amount was raised to ten cents.[26]

Contests, parties, concerts, fairs, and scholarships all were examples of ways in which the Women's Institutes of Alberta interacted externally with the schools in their districts. It was through these events that the Institutes were able to give extra academic and social impetus to the rural schools in the province. In addition, the Women's Institutes were able to aid the schools in other ways. Many of the Institutes served hot lunches at the schools on a daily basis throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Examples were the Warspite, the Boyle, the Munson, and the Garrington Women's Institutes. Other ways in which the Women's Institutes were able to aid rural schools were through donations of various supplies. In the early 1920s the Westlock W.I. gave cash donations to the school to be used for books; the selection of volumes was left to the discretion of the teacher. Since little music was taught in the schools, the Westlock W.I. voted funds for musical records and for record players.[27] The Munson W.I. placed swings and teeters on the grounds of village and rural schools in the area,[28] and in 1936 the Garrington W.I. donated books and geographies to the schools in their district.[29] The Springvale W.I. purchased swings for the school and arranged for trees to be planted in the school yard. Fifty cups were bought by the Institute for use in the school at social functions.[30] Soft handkerchiefs were made in the 1920s by members of the Warspite W.I. and were distributed to school children. This Institute also purchased an oil burner for the school at a cost of two dollars and fifty cents.[31] In 1912, the Lea Park W.I. bought an organ for the school,[32] the Veteran W.I. made a similar purchase for their school in 1936,[33] and the Gordon W.I. donated a piano to the school in 1938.[34] It also was in 1938 that the Boyle W.I. collected funds so that children could be present at the Royal Visit.[35]

At the annual convention of the A.W.I. in 1919, concern was expressed over the fact that noon and recess periods in schools were unorganized. The convention resolved to pressure the government into taking the necessary steps to have all play periods supervised under the direction of the teacher ". . . so that physical and moral development may result."[36] In 1928, the A.W.I. Advisory Board co-operated with the Department of Education in arranging a vote of the school children across the province in their choice of a floral emblem for Alberta. The children indicated a preference for the wild rose and in 1930 their choice was officially endorsed by the passage of an Act by the Legislature.[37] It was the W.I. members' interest in education that led them to interact with teachers and with governments in improving the schools. The Institutes were more than willing to donate their time and their funds to ensure that children who attended rural schools received a sound and well-rounded education. Schooling was transformed into a more enjoyable experience for students socially and academically, through fairs, parties, concerts, playground and musical equipment, scholarships, contests and hot lunches sponsored and donated by the Women's Institutes.

W.I.s and the First World War

At the time of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the Women's Institute movement in Alberta was relatively young. The most senior Institutes were those which had organized in 1912. The single exception was the Lea Park W.I. which was formed in 1909; by the early months of 1914, however, it had merged with the Tring U.F.A. Thus the war years of 1914 to 1918 also were a period of organization and mobilization for the Women's Institutes in Alberta. Nevertheless, the W.I.s were actively involved in the war effort; every Institute then in existence made a contribution. Often the Institutes worked in conjunction with the Red Cross. For example, the Munson, Mountain View, Penhold, and Garrington Women's Institutes, formed in 1912, 1915, 1916, and 1917 respectively, each did a great deal of sewing for the Red Cross. The Westlock W.I. did not form until 1919, but during the war the women of the district were involved in aiding the Red Cross. A number of female dominated groups in the area, including the Red Cross, the I.O.D.E., the Hospital Auxiliary, and various church groups, joined together in a common war effort.[38] Similarly, the Burdett W.I. did not form until 1922, but prior to this time the women of the district belonged to the Returned Soldiers' Aid Society and hence, had been involved in the war effort.[39]

In addition to Red Cross work, the Women's Institutes regularly sent items to the enlisted personnel. The following was the contribution of the Rugby W.I. (founded in 1913):

> [Our] Institute was well established when war broke out & a farewell social at the school was given to 7 volunteers. Parcels were regularly sent to 25 soldiers containing Christmas cake, 2 prs. knitted socks, handkerchiefs, oxo cubes, candy & gum. Once they decided to send eggs & when the tins were opened the boys thought they were bombed.[40]

A sum of one thousand and forty-six dollars was raised by the Rugby W.I. for the war effort by holding tag days, charity funds, bazaars, quilting bees, concerts, and socials.[41] The Aldersyde W.I., formed in 1914, sent gifts and letters to men in the service.[42] Hundreds of pounds of jam and food were sent by the Walsh W.I. (formed in 1912), as well as knitted garments. This Institute also raised hundreds of dollars which were contributed to the Red Cross.[43] The patriotic work of the Cowley W.I. was exemplary. Members raised nearly three thousand dollars for the Red Cross, they knitted five hundred pairs of socks, and they gave hundreds of dollars worth of farm produce, fruit, and groceries to the Convalescent Soldiers' Home.[44]

A report on the combined efforts of all the local branches of Women's Institutes was given at the fourth annual A.W.I. convention in 1918. The patriotic work consisted of $30,116.87 raised for war purposes, 32,243 articles made for the Red Cross, 627 Christmas boxes sent to men overseas, and the "adoption" of many prisoners of war by various Institutes. These figures represent the patriotic work on the part of the Women's Institutes for 1918 only.[45] Miss McAdams was one of the speakers at the 1918 convention. Her address centered upon the work of the various departments of the Red Cross overseas. Another speaker was Premier Stewart who outlined for the delegates precisely what the men in the trenches had made possible for Canadians at home. He ended his address with a call for further sacrifice and service from those at home.[46]

Considerable concern was expressed at the convention over the wartime food supply. One of the resolutions which dealt with this issue was as follows:

> Be it resolved that to prevent waste of foodstuffs, this Conference express its belief that the milling of grain should be done in Canada and only the manufactured article be exported to Britain until such time as remedial legislation be enacted prohibiting the destruction of foodstuffs in the manufacture of intoxicating beverages.[47]

The passage of this resolution was, without doubt, related to the fact that Mrs. Nellie McClung was present at the convention. Mrs. McClung had recently returned from the Women's War Conference held in Ottawa in February 1918. On the train trip to Ottawa, the

Alberta delegates had prepared a resolution that was very similar to the one cited above. Their motivation was that Great Britain had not introduced prohibition. The controversial resolution was presented at the conference by Mrs. McClung and seconded by Mrs. Emily Murphy; it was carried by the delegates.[48] The reappearance of the resolution at the A.W.I. convention is evidence that Mrs. McClung had persuaded the Women's Institutes to take up the cudgel.

Another resolution passed at the 1918 convention was that the ". . . A.W.I. endorse the Canada Food Control Board in whatsoever measures they adopt to the definite end of greater production and greater conservation."[49] Dr. Helen McMurchy spoke to the A.W.I. convention on "The Food Conscience" which she defined with a graphic story of a good neighbor. The allies were looking to Canada, the good neighbor, for a large part of their food supply. Dr. McMurchy urged that food conservation begin in the home and that women become aware of such things as the proper amount of food to serve children so as to avoid wastage. The Hon. Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture, outlined the hardships faced by farm women who were single-handedly attempting to aid in grain production. As a solution to this problem, the Minister suggested that women and girls from cities and towns go to the farms to help rural women.[50]

The work of the Women's Institutes in Alberta during the First World War was quite remarkable when it is considered that the movement was just getting underway. All the Institutes then in existence were at most only a few years old and the provincial organization was formed in the midst of the war years. Nevertheless, the Institutes still managed to aid the Red Cross, send parcels overseas, gather patriotic funds, and raise the province's food consciousness in the realms of production and conservation. The useful work done by the Women's Institutes in the First World War was repeated in the Second World War, 1939-1945. Red Cross work was performed once again and articles were sent to the men overseas including bibles, ditty bags, knitted clothing, quilts, blankets, fur lined jackets for the Merchant Marines, food, and sewing packets called hussifs (housewife's sewing aids) containing thread, needles, and other sewing needs.[51] At home, the Institutes aided the cause by purchasing war stamps, and the Penhold W.I. had the opportunity to entertain the Air Force training station in their area.[52] After the war, and in conjunction with the Rotary Club, the Munson W.I. sent food parcels to Britain to augment the diets of elderly persons.[53]

Aid to the Community

A member of the Walsh W.I. wrote "whenever there has been a call of need this branch has responded to the best of its ability."[54] The same might have been said of each and every one of the Women's Institutes in Alberta. Administering aid to those in need was an essential facet of the external interaction of Women's Institutes; it was something which communities could count on. When a major disaster struck, the A.W.I. became involved so that the entire W.I. network throughout the province could be mobilized. A situation such as this arose in 1919. On 10 November of that year an emergency meeting of the A.W.I. Advisory Board was called at the request of the Hon. Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture. The purpose of the meeting was to organize a system of relief for families suffering the effects of drought and crop failure in Southern Alberta. Individual Institutes already had been extending relief to these people since May, but the need was so great as to warrant a centralized province-wide effort. A Women's Institute Relief Depot was opened in Calgary as a part of the supply and distribution programme formulated by the Advisory Board. On the advice of Mr. Marshall, all undue publicity was studiously avoided.[55] All Women's Institute branches immediately rallied to the support of the victims; a mere smattering of those branches which sent aid in the form of money and clothing were the Walsh W.I., the Loyalist W.I., the Munson W.I., the Penhold W.I., and the Garrington W.I. Voluntary and unsolicited contributions were sent from numerous Women's Institutes in British Columbia and Ontario, and many private citizens who were unassociated with the Women's Institutes sent donations. A total of 2,252 persons in Southern Alberta were helped via distribution through the W.I. Relief Depot of 30,000 garments sewen for the purpose, $6,942 worth of shoes and materials to be made by the recipients, and innumerable bales of second-hand clothing.[56]

Individual Women's Institutes supplied aid to people in need on a regular basis. In 1917 and 1918 the Garrington W.I. supplied parcels of clothing to destitute families and made donations to the blind soldiers and sailors fund; in 1919 a sum of twenty-five dollars was donated to the fund. Other donations were made of seed potatoes, five dollars and two quilts were given to a family that was burned out in a fire, five dollars was given to the Save the Children Fund, sewing was done for motherless families, and vegetables were sent to the Children's Home in Olds in 1924 because the Home's garden had been hailed out.[57] The Falun W.I. served the community in a number of ways by aiding fire victims with quilts, sheets, clothing, and food, by helping needy families with clothing, and by giving a baby plate or cup to all new arrivals in the district.[58] Monetary donations were made by the Aldersyde W.I. to the Wood's Christian Home and to the Salvation Army.[59] During the depression years members of Women's Institutes provided aid to needy families in distinctive ways: the Boyle W.I. distributed vegetables,[60] the Warspite W.I. supplied live hens,[61] and the Veteran W.I. packaged clothing and food hampers.[62] At the second meeting of the Burdett W.I. in December 1921, a relief committee was formed to look into cases of need in the area.[63] That same year the Loyalist W.I. gave a kitchen shower for one needy family and another got underwear: "$18.00 bought good underwear and plenty of flannelette for bloomers."[64] Needy families also were helped by the Independence W.I.; one year a sewing bee was held to make complete outfits for a motherless family of five.[65] The members of the Westlock W.I. ". . . often supplied families in need with food: surpluses from gardens, flour, and meat (often wild). Milk and eggs were very cheap (10 c. qt. & eggs 15 to 25 c. doz.) were bought by W.I. women and taken to families with children who were destitute."[66] The Penhold and the Walsh W.I.s collected vegetables and clothing for distribution to those in need. Finally, many Women's Institutes supplied layettes to women who had no means by which to obtain clothing for their newborns. In 1933 the A.W.I., in co-operation with the I.O.D.E. and the U.F.W.A., sent out five hundred and twelve layettes at an average cost of seven dollars apiece.[67]

Over the years the Women's Institutes gave contributions to aid individuals with special needs. The Cowley W.I. spent over one thousand dollars in surgical and hospital treatment for a crippled child. He was cured.[68] In 1937 Mrs. Cornelia Wood of Stoney Plain wrote to the Women's Institutes asking for Royal Year Cake Fronts for a young man in that vicinity who was trying to go to University for four years. The Boyle W.I. contributed.[69] Mr. Ross Riste needed a back operation in 1939. The Gordon W.I. raised the money and the operation was performed at the University of Alberta Hospital.[70] The answer to one case of need which probably was not overly appreciated was a supply of cod liver oil to a child by the Warspite W.I.[71]

A frequent gesture on the part of Women's Institutes was to remember the sick and the bereaved in their communities. Warspite, Munson, Springvale, Garrington, Independence, Gordon, and Burdett were among those that made such gestures through sending cards, flowers, or fruit, and by visits of special 'sunshine committees'. People did not necessarily have to be ill to receive W.I. visits. The members of the Independence W.I. often visited an elderly woman in their district who could not attend the W.I. meetings. Instead, they brought the meetings to her so that she could enjoy the social contact.[72] Another community service offered by Women's Institutes was the care of cemeteries. Some of the Institutes that assumed this responsibility were Veteran, Falun, Munson, and Bashaw.

Medical Aid

During the early decades of the 1900s, medical services for rural Albertans were in the nascent stages of placement. Many areas did not have access to the regular services of a qualified doctor and hospital facilities were situated in urban centers. It was because of this need that Women's Institutes directed their efforts towards securing medical services and facilities for their communities. A popular medical service which the majority of Women's Institutes instigated in their areas was Well Baby Clinics. Usually a W.I. would secure the services of a doctor or a nurse who would agree to come to the area on an appointed day. The clinics often were held in the home of a W.I. member and it was not uncommon for as many as forty or fifty babies to be examined in a day. All the women in a district would gather with their babies at a W.I. member's home and await their turn to see the doctor. Mrs. Wahl of the Rugby W.I. used her home as a clinic for a number of years. Dr. Cody of Calgary and Dr. Clarke of Didsbury would come to her home to examine an average of forty babies from six districts.[73] Some of the other Institutes that held Well Baby Clinics in their communities were Garrington, Penhold, Loyalist, Kinniburgh, Munson, Warspite, Veteran, and Burdett. Well Baby Clinics were precursors to Health Units. Women's Institutes also organized health clinics for school children. A resolution was passed at the annual A.W.I. convention of 1917 which called for the introduction of medical inspections in all rural schools; this resolution was reiterated at the 1918 convention.[74]

In certain situations the Women's Institutes organized mass operations for the children of a district. The following example of such an undertaking is from the records of the Kinniburgh W.I.:

> In response to a K.W.I. request in August 1925, a tonsil clinic was held at the Purple Springs school with qualified personnel

> from Edmonton. About 25 children of the area had their tonsils removed. Parents arrived the morning of the clinic with their children in their beds. They had their operation and were taken home a few hours later. One of the cloak rooms was used for an operating room & children waited outside till their turn came up.[75]

Although these operating conditions were not exactly satisfactory, it was all that was available in the district. Without a proper hospital facility, area residents had little choice but to improvise. Women's Institutes did what they could in the way of educating one another through home nursing courses and papers presented at Institute meetings but there were limits upon what even they could achieve. In the mid-1920s the A.W.I. made a concerted effort to promote education in public health. The organization was able to secure the co-operation of federal and provincial departments of health in this endeavor.[76]

The Women's Institutes were untiring in their efforts to attain trained medical personnel for rural areas. At the annual A.W.I. convention of 1916 a resolution was passed stating that "for the conservation of life in rural districts" the government of Alberta be asked to assist Women's Institutes in establishing district nurses in the more remote areas of the province.[77] At the 1918 convention it reported that several Institutes had devoted considerable time throughout the year in attempting to secure district nurses, municipal hospitals, and doctors for their communities.[78] The Women's Institutes attempted to attract more women to the nursing profession by recommending changes in training programmes. The following resolution was passed at the A.W.I. convention in 1919:

> Whereas the supply of trained nurses in the rural parts of the province is inadequate as conclusively shown in the recent epidemic [of influenza] and

> Whereas it is undesirable to lower the standard of the nursing profession by introducing a two year course under the present system of training and
> Whereas the required number of girls are not willing to take a three year's arduous hospital training, involving as it does, lectures and studies after 12 long hours' duty and
> Whereas such studies could be more efficiently pursued by persons not physically fatigued; and
> Whereas more thorough professional training could be more easily acquired, in less time than under the present system,
> Be it resolved that A.W.I. ask the Provincial Gov't to establish a chair of nursing in the University of Alberta where the theory could be acquired in one year; and further that a Provincial free hospital superintended by fully qualified nurses, be established where ample material would be provided for the one and one half years' practical training which would complete the course.[79]

By attempting to make the training programmes for nursing more attractive, the W.I. hoped that greater numbers of women would enroll and thereby create a pool of nurses who could be employed in the rural districts. Yet progress was slow; as late as 1935 the Boyle W.I. was in the process of drawing up a petition to pay five dollars for a doctor for the Boyle area.[80]

Once hospitals were established in an area, the Women's Institutes were more than willing to offer unstinting support.[81] The Loyalist W.I. raised funds for the Consort Red Cross hospital whenever there was a need; in July 1920 they made a quilt and pillows for the hospital, in May 1924 they donated a new mattress and pillows, and in November of the same year they donated two more mattresses at a cost to the Institute of twelve dollars and fifty cents apiece.[82] The Institutes supported hospitals in other ways as well. At the 1919 convention of the A.W.I., the following resolution was passed:

> Resolved that A.W.I. request the Federal Gov't for an equal division of the Canadian Hospital Equipment in France and that Alberta receive her share to be installed in a Central Hospital in the Province.[83]

This resolution suggested a sensible way in which to dispose of the hospital equipment that no longer was needed after the First World War. In cases of emergencies when it was not always possible to transport a victim to a distant hospital, it was the Women's Institutes that delivered aid. In 1917 the Garrington W.I. equipped a linen chest for emergency situations in the district. In 1920 the linen chest was replenished to include a hot water bottle, twenty yards of sheeting, six yards of turkish towelling, and eight pillowcases. The Red Cross contributed an additional twelve pairs of pillowcases, eight pairs of pyjamas, four shirts, five pairs of socks, one sling, and one hospital shirt to the linen chest.[84]

Another area of medical concern to Women's Institutes in Alberta was the spread of diseases. By 1918 the Women's Institutes were extremely concerned about the spread of venereal diseases. An A.W.I. resolution illustrates the extent to which members were willing to go in order to prevent the spread of V.D.:

> Be it resolved
> I. That venereal diseases be made reportable.
> (a) Adequate penalties be provided in other communicable diseases.
> (b) Patients be required to continue under treatment, inspection and direction of competent medical practitioners for two years in cases of syphilis and one year in cases of gonorrhea.
> (c) Transmission of venereal disease be made an indictable offense.
>
> II. Free tests be provided through an adequate Health Dept.
>
> III. Rescue homes be appointed in rural districts.
>
> IV. Health certificates be required from both parties before issuing a marriage license.[85]

At the convention in 1919 the A.W.I. passed a resolution asking the provincial government to provide free medical care for tubercular patients. W.I. members held the conviction that sanitarium fees prohibited consumptives from taking treatment. Not only were these people not cured, but they infected others as well. The provincial government refused this request; the reason given was a lack of funds.[86] Disease was combatted at the district level. In 1937 the Kinniburgh W.I. assisted District IV in the A.W.I. project to purchase radium for the cure of cancer. Through their efforts radium was provided free to all patients.[87] Local Women's Institutes also combatted diseases individually. For example, in 1938 the Boyle W.I. wrote to the Department of Public Health for innoculations and vaccinations against Diptheria and Smallpox for school age and preschool children.[88]

Social Activities Sponsored by W.I.s

Social activities played an important role in the Women's Institute movement in Alberta. In the previous chapter, the topic of in-house activities for the members was considered. It was found that Women's Institutes provided the only opportunity for social interaction in the lives of many farm women. Women's Institutes also provided the social activities for entire communities. This was done in the schools with parties, concerts, and school fairs sponsored by the W.I.s, and it also was done for the adult members of rural communities. The social activities were numerous and varied. Sometimes they were held in order to raise money for W.I. purposes, at other times they were held solely for the enjoyment of the community.

On special occasions such as Christmas, Valentine's Day, Hallowe'en, and Thanksgiving communities counted on the Women's

Institutes to organize some form of entertainment. This task was willingly performed by W.I. members with programmes featuring community dances and dinners. In 1932 a masquerade dance was held by the Boyle W.I.: "$16.85 was collected at the door, expenses totalled $13.50, leaving a balance of $3.35 to add to the treasury."[89] Actually, dances were such a popular form of rural entertainment that they were held at virtually any time of the year. In 1938 the Garrington W.I. hosted eight dances for the community.[90] Members of the Falun W.I. favored barn dances which they held at four different barns in the area.[91] The Lea Park W.I. held a Hard Times social in 1910. The evening featured a musical programme and a model fish pond at which "bachelors & some of the fair sex" fished for prizes. A "dainty supper" was served at midnight and then the dancing commenced, continuing "till the 'wee sma hours'."[92] Garden parties also were popular; the Gordon and Langdon W.I.s held them in 1939 and 1929 respectively.[93] However, the members of the Garrington W.I. held garden parties for their community on an annual basis. This was one of the ways in which the Garrington W.I. raised funds: in the first year, 1923, they raised $28,75, in 1924 it was $36.00, in 1925 they raised $50.00, in 1927 they raised a high of $61.95, and in 1929 the amount dropped to $45.00.[94]

An activity in which rural women took particular pleasure was serving festive meals to guests. Women's Institute members took turns acting as hostesses at their meetings and among the duties of this position was to provide a light meal for the other members. The members were only too pleased to provide this same service to the community. One way in which this was done was in holding Women's

Institute teas and here there was a variety. In addition to the regular teas at which dainty sandwiches and baking were available, the Warspite W.I. held gypsy teas,[95] the Loyalist W.I. held silver teas,[96] and the Langdon W.I. favored strawberry teas.[97] W.I. members also served lunches at special occasions; sometimes they had a theme such as a 'made in Alberta' luncheon. Lunches often were sold by W.I.s at dances and concerts or, in the case of the Falun W.I., at auction sales.[98] Box socials were popular. A Glendale W.I. member remembered one held by her Institute in the 1920s:

> One year we had a box social; a prize was given for the most beautiful and one for the original box. I made little sheaves of green oats surround my lunch box to make it look like a stook and landed the first prize original.[99]

Dinners were served by the W.I.s as well; some were 'Pot Luck' dinners and surprise dinners. The Veteran W.I. held "Maggie and Jiggs" corned beef dinners in 1928 and 1929,[100] in 1912 the Lea Park W.I. held a Conundrum dinner at which foods and drinks were disguised on the menu,[101] and in 1926 the Garrington W.I. hosted a chicken and pie dinner for the community.[102]

Many social activities were held by Women's Institutes for the enjoyment of entire communities. Card parties were a regular event among the Aldersyde, Loyalist, Lea Park, Glendale, Falun, Warspite, Langdon, and Veteran Women's Institutes. Large crowds attended W.I. plays whenever they were held; one play presented by the Springvale W.I. netted sixty-three dollars.[103] Three act plays were a yearly feature of the Independence W.I.[104] W.I. concerts also drew large audiences. They were an annual event with the Langdon W.I., and the Warspite W.I. held concerts as a means of raising funds.[105] Other social events held by Women's Institutes in Alberta were bingos, ball games, quilting bees, showers, and bazaars.

The first community picnic ever to be sponsored by a Women's Institute in Alberta was the Dominion Day picnic organized by the Lea Park W.I. and held on 1 July 1909. Arrangements for this picnic began in April, only two months after the Institute was founded. A number of committees were appointed including a tea committee, a coffee committee, a reception committee, a waiter committee, and a sports committee. The full co-operation of the Tring U.F.A. also was secured.[106] On 1 July, the day of the picnic, the reception committee gathered on the grounds early in order to meet the guests and "convert strangers into acquaintances and friends." After some delay, a lunch was served. Everyone then gathered to watch and participate in an afternoon of sports competitions. "[In] spite of the several heavy showers of rain," the following events were carried out:

		First Prize	Second Prize	
100 yds.	Flat Race open	$1.00	.50	
30 yds.	Wheelbarrow Race	cigars		
	Long Jump	$1.00	.50	
	Hop, Step & Jump			
50 yds.	Girls' Race Under 14	.50	.25	
" "	" " Over 14	.75	.50	
100 yds.	Sack Race	$1.00	.50	
1/4 mile	Men's Race	$2.00	$1.00	
50 yds.	Ladies' Race	special prize		
100 yds.	Veterans' Race	special prize		
	High Jump	$1.00	.50	
100 yds.	3-Legged Race	$1.00	.50	
	Pole Jump	$1.00	.50	
1/2 mile	Horse Race open	$5.00	$3.00	Entry fee
1/2 mile	Pony Race 14 hands & under	$4.00	$2.00	" "
1/4 mile	OK Race Team & Wagon	$3.00		" "
	Bucking Contest	$5.00		" "
1/4 mile	Pony Race for Girls	$3.00	$2.00	
	Potato Race	1 bushel potatoes		

	First Prize	Second Prize
Climbing Greasy Pole	A Watch	
Catching Greasy Pig	Pig	
Putting the Shot	$1.00	
Tug o' War		
Tring v. All Comers	cigars	
Football		
Baseball		

Note!
Entrance fees devoted to Prize Money
Sports Committee[107]

Between four and five hundred people in the district attended this picnic and the total value of the prizes disbursed was approximately seventy dollars.[108] Once the Women's Institute movement was underway in the province, several of the branches began holding annual picnics for their communities. Some of these Institutes were Aldersyde, Munson, Loyalist, Garrington, Glendale, and Langdon.

W.I. Buildings

One of the more tangible results of the work of Women's Institutes was the erection of buildings. Rest rooms, libraries, community halls, local hospitals, and maternity homes were the types of facilities built through the initiative and support of the Women's Institutes for the benefit of entire communities. Rest rooms for use by country residents were built by the Munson and the Penhold W.I.s in their communities.[109] The Prairie Circle W.I., organized on a Demonstration Train in 1915, constructed a rest room as the Institute's first enterprise.[110] After the First World War the Penhold W.I. determined to build a Memorial Hall for the soldiers. The W.I. launched a fund raising campaign and voluntary labor was given in hauling gravel, excavating, and cement work. A local lumber firm took shares in the building as payment and a local building contractor constructed the hall and then paid his workers himself until such time as the W.I. could reimburse him. In total, the hall and equipment cost seven thousand dollars. The hall was opened in November 1919 with a military dance. In 1945 the Penhold Memorial Hall was presented to the Village of Penhold, free of charge, in memory of the men who had served in the Second World War.[111] The Penhold W.I. also donated funds to the Sylvan Lake W.I. to assist them in building the first pier.[112] The pier was officially opened on 12 July 1928 by R. B. Bennett.[113]

Operating a community hall was a branch priority of the Walsh W.I. The first hall was built by ranchers and residents of the community and in 1903 it served as the village school. The Walsh W.I. paid for repairs and furnishings for the building and became part owners. In August 1923 the W.I. purchased the former Merchants Bank building for three hundred and fifty dollars and converted it into a hall. The main floor was rented at nine dollars per month as a Pool Hall; the upper floor was used for various club meetings. By charging rent to monthly users, the Walsh W.I. was able to donate the hall for community functions free of charge.[114]

The Independence W.I. was organized in 1919 and on 15 August of that year a concert was staged to aid the community of Busby in building a hall. Of the sixty-nine dollars netted on the concert, twenty-five dollars was donated to the Busby cause. However, the Independence community did not have a hall and the W.I. was using the Bamill school, the Pickering hayloft, the Ellett brothers' house, and the Independence church for functions. A community hall definitely was needed. In 1923 the W.I. decided to erect a log building. Mr. Farrand, who had plenty of trees on his farm near Deadman Lake, cut the logs and hauled them to the building site which was an acre of land donated by Mr. Dunham. A frame building was then deemed to be more desirable so the logs were hauled to the Spargo brothers' mill and sawed into lumber. The entire building was constructed through voluntary labor. On 17 April 1925 the Independence Hall was officially opened with a concert and dance:

> And was there ever a crowd. Benches were made by nailing boards to firewood. There were difficulties to overcome but the hall was open and usable and we felt like a million dollars. We had more than a building. It was a birth of a community spirit, the need of community social life, the blending of community ideals, work and money. The Independence Institute has always believed in something educational, something uplifting, and something for the head, the spirit, the stomach and plenty for the heels.[115]

It was unconstrained enthusiasm such as that exhibited above that made major tasks such as the construction of buildings possible. Women's Institutes were motivating forces in communities; they caused an awakening of community spirit and good will among neighbors. People would donate time and money toward W.I. projects and in doing so, they would establish bonds of friendship and trust with one another.

Women's Institutes also catered to the medical needs of their communities. The Sexsmith W.I. opened a maternity home in 1928 with a trained practical nurse in charge. In 1929 a larger building was obtained for the purpose, in 1930 a better building was found, and in 1936 an even better building was purchased. Finally, in 1942, Miss Haakstad purchased a home which she and two helpers operated as a maternity home. A record was established in 1937 when there was not one death of a mother or a baby in the care of the maternity home.[116]

The Berwyn W.I. was organized on 25 March 1928 with a definite project in mind--to erect a hospital. The Municipal Council gave a grant of three thousand dollars which was used to purchase and remodel a house into a six-bed hospital. Donations were made by two medical doctors in Edmonton to equip the operating room, merchants donated the furnishings, and the Kerndale W.I., the Griffin Creek W.I., the White Swan U.F.A., and the local baseball team each undertook to furnish a ward. On 28 September, six months after the Institute was founded, the Berwyn hospital was opened with one nurse in charge and one maid.[117]

The Fairview W.I. opened a twelve-bed hospital in November 1924 at Waterhole, Alberta. When the railway was extended from Whitelaw to Fairview in 1928, the hospital and the village of Waterhole were moved to Fairview. The hospital was government-approved and, therefore, it earned a government grant for maintenance. However, ownership and control of the hospital rested with the Fairview W.I. In 1931 a Nurses' Home was added. Control of the hospital was a major undertaking for the Fairview W.I. and it consumed much of their time; in 1935 there were thirty-four major operations performed. By 1937 the W.I. determined that they had done their share so they turned the hospital over to the community. The W.I. continued to contribute funds and sewing to the hospital.[118] Another W.I. hospital was that built by the Prairie Circle W.I. in 1918. The members raised the funds for the hospital and their husbands erected the building. It was a ten-bed structure staffed by two nurses and a cook. The husbands later excavated a basement and it was the doctor who put in a furnace. In 1945 the W.I. turned the building over to the Municipal Hospital

Board.[119]

W.I.s and Prohibition

Prohibition was introduced in Alberta in the midst of the war years and it became yet another area of external interaction among the Women's Institutes. On 21 July 1915 the government of Alberta had called a plebiscite on the question and in July 1916 prohibition legislation took effect in the province.[120] By March 1918 the federal government was prepared to augment the provincial laws through an Order-in-Council which outlawed the manufacture of beverage alcohol and prohibited its transportation or sale anywhere in Canada. The Order-in-Council was based upon the emergency powers of the War Measures Act and it was to run until the end of the war and one year beyond, (the expiry date was November 1919).[121] The Women's Institutes supported prohibition legislation once it was passed; as a law they felt that it should be enforced. As already indicated under the discussion of the W.I.s' activities during the First World War, the A.W.I. did pass a resolution in 1918 which expressed the view that only milled grain should be exported to Britain as a precaution against its being used in the manufacture of liquor. Other resolutions regarding liquor also were passed. At the fifth annual convention of March 1919 the A.W.I. resolved that the present laws on prohibition should be left on the statute books until such time as the soldiers returned and a vote could be taken on it.[122] In December of that year the Order-in-Council prohibiting the importation of liquor was repealed and the Canada Temperance Act was amended to provide for provincial plebiscites on the question.[123] Alberta, Saskatchewan, and

Manitoba voted to remain dry.

At the seventh annual convention in June 1921 the A.W.I. resolved that each Institute in the province be asked to send a letter to its M.L.A. requesting that he "do all in his power to support the Prohibition legislation."[124] In 1922, the W.I.s were concerned that the Liquor Act was not being properly enforced in the province. The following is a letter from a member of the U.F.A. administration responding to a resolution sent to him by the Warner Constituency:

> December 11th, 1922
>
> Dear Madam:
>
> I am writing to acknowledge copy of a resolution, in regard to the enforcement of the Liquor Act, signed by yourself and two other ladies. This is the resolution of the Women's Institute of the Warner Constituency.
>
> For your information, I may say that this is the first resolution I have seen for some time, complaining of the loose enforcement of The Liquor Act. While it is true that it is not being enforced as well as we could like to see it, expressions of opinion that we have had so far are that the enforcement of the Act is showing improvement all the time. We are glad to have this expression of opinion from your organization. I will pass your resolution along to the Attorney General for his information, so that he may take whatever steps he can to remedy the condition, so far as it can be remedied.
>
> Yours very truly,
>
> Mrs. Helen O. Risinger
> New Dayton, Alberta[125]

The A.W.I. also sent a resolution to the government complaining of the loose enforcement of the Liquor Act. However, at this point the Women's Institutes did not have much longer to concern themselves with prohibition. A provincial plebiscite was held in 1923 in which the populace voted in favor of the government sale of liquor. In May 1924 the Alberta Liquor Control Board came into effect spelling the end of prohibition.[126]

As a whole the Women's Institutes could not be considered particularly ardent supporters of temperance or prohibition. Certainly there were other organizations, such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.), that were more concerned with the alcohol issue. The degree of interest actually depended upon the sentiments of the membership of each individual Institute. A member of the Westlock W.I. pointed out that the use of alcohol was not a problem in the area and that the Institute had discussed alcohol only as it related to nutrition and budgeting. However, there was a W.C.T.U. organization in the district and "no doubt some of them belonged to W.I."[127] The members of the Burdett W.I. were interested in the issue to the extent that in 1921 they invited the Rev. Percy Johnston to speak on the topic of prohibition and to explain the Liquor Act.[128] The Rugby W.I. was an example of one of the Institutes that was more interested in prohibition. This Institute contributed funds to the W.C.T.U. and "once they wanted the Board to secure a teacher who was a teetotaler and a piano player."[129] The member reported that she qualified on the first condition but not the second.

W.I.s and Suffrage

Alberta was among the first provinces in Canada to grant full suffrage to its female inhabitants. On 24 February 1916 it was announced by Premier Sifton in his speech from the throne that his government intended to introduce an equal franchise bill. The next day the promised bill, which afforded women absolute equality with men in provincial, municipal, and school politics, was brought forth in the premier's own name.[130] The second reading of the bill, on 1 March, happened to coincide with the meeting of the second annual convention of the A.W.I. which was held in the Macdonald Hotel in Edmonton. It was the premier himself who opened the morning session by welcoming the delegates to Edmonton. In the afternoon the convention adjourned to the legislature ". . . so that the women might be present at the memorable session during which the Equal Franchise Bill passed its second reading."[131] On the morning of the following day the A.W.I. immediately drafted a resolution expressing ". . . our appreciation of the action of the Alberta Gov't with respect to the Equal Franchise Act."[132] Four days later, on 6 March, the bill passed its third reading and the women of Alberta became the second in Canada to attain full political equality.[133]

Having attained the vote the members of Women's Institutes were determined to exercise their new right. Mock balloting was practiced by the members of the Garrington W.I. in an attempt to dissipate any apprehensions concerning the method of casting votes.[134] The women of the Westlock W.I. urged those among their members who were not naturalized to become Canadian citizens so that they could vote. Moreover, the "local W.I. members made it their business to see that not only members but any women entitled to vote got to the polls."[135] Women's place in politics became a matter of keen interest to members of Women's Institutes. At the A.W.I. convention of 1920 the question was raised as to whether the discussion of politics was contrary to the constitution of the A.W.I. Miss MacIsaac addressed the question in the following way:

> . . . there is nothing in the act which forbids the discussion of politics. Party politics are not desirable and indeed would be the beginning of the end for the W.I. Politics in the broad sense of the word, meaning the study of national problems, must be studied and discussed if we are to keep abreast of the times, which is our one hope of life.[136]

Thus while the W.I.s tended to maintain a low profile when it came to party politics, they did address political issues and they did have a voice when it came time to vote. Furthermore, W.I. resolutions from the local and the provincial levels were regularly presented to the provincial government where they were well received. In this way the Women's Institutes were able to influence the government for the benefit of their communities.

W.I.G.C.s

The idea for introducing Women's Institute Girls' Clubs was engendered in 1918 when girls exhibited an intense interest in Nursing and First Aid courses presented at Women's Institute branches by Home Nursing instructors. It was upon the suggestion of the girls themselves that Girls' Clubs were organized and supervisors appointed from the Women's Institutes. These clubs gradually developed interests that were broader than first aid and the demand for formal organization increased. Therefore, in 1919 the legislature passed an amendment to the Women's Institute Act creating Women's Institute Girls' Clubs.[137] The more pertinent sections of the Act are as follows:

> 41. Girls' clubs, to be known as 'women's institute girls' clubs,' may be formed under this Act by any eight or more girls of not less than twelve years of age, with such social, literary, educational or recreational objects as may be approved by the provincial advisory board.
>
> (2) The provincial advisory board may make regulations respecting the formation, government and operation of such

clubs not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act.[138] The annual government grant appropriated to individual branches of Women's Institutes was raised from five dollars, (which was the amount first introduced in 1912), to ten dollars. To receive the grant a branch was required to have a paid-up membership of ten or more. Under the Act, Girls' Clubs also were entitled to annual grants of five dollars if they had a paid-up membership of eight or more.[139] Fifteen Girls' Clubs were organized in 1919 with Miss Bess McDermand, the Assistant Superintendent of Women's Institutes, as their supervisor.[140]

Girls' Clubs were auxiliaries of Women's Institutes and leaders were selected from the W.I. membership of each branch. Many Girls' Clubs simply assumed the names of the parent organizations. Hence, there was an Argyle W.I.G.C., a Warspite W.I.G.C., and a Walsh W.I.G.C.[141] Other Girls' Clubs chose more distinctive names. The Lively Workers flourished under the Burdett W.I., the Gordon W.I. sponsored the Dancing Daisies Girls' Club, the Sweet Briars operated under the Independence W.I., the Rugby Bluebells were associated with the Rugby W.I., and the Kinniburgh Sunshine A.W.I. Girls' Club was organized by the Kinniburgh W.I.[142] The Girls' Club under the Munson W.I. was the second such club to be formed in the province. It first was named the Munson W.I.G.C. and later was renamed the Munson Merrymakers W.I. Club.[143] The activities of the Munson W.I.G.C. paralleled those of the other branches. This club took part in the province wide competitions for the Emily Murphy Athletic Trophy, the Nellie McClung Public Speaking Trophy, and the Mrs. J. Rodell Cup for short story.[144] The first Munson W.I.G.C. camp was held at the

Wigmore Ferry and later at the Bleriot Ferry.[145] A teacher from the Munson district recalled that once a month the leader of the Girls' Club arrived at the school, whereupon a short meeting was conducted, followed by a period of handicraft. The students then enjoyed a special treat before they left for home.[146]

The provincial organization for the W.I.G.C.s was formed at the annual A.W.I. convention in 1920. It became known as the Alberta Women's Institute Girls' Club (A.W.I.G.C.). Miss McDermand remained as the A.W.I. supervisor and Edna Francisco was elected as the first president. The annual A.W.I.G.C. conventions were held jointly with the A.W.I. conventions for the first four years. In 1920 there were forty W.I.G.C.s organized with a total membership of eight hundred and forty. In 1921 there were fifty-four Clubs. At the third annual convention of the A.W.I.G.C. a provincial fund was started through an annual levy of fifty cents per member; this amount was decreased to twenty-five cents per member in 1924. Also in 1924 was the appointment of Miss Isobel Noble, past president of the A.W.I., as supervisor of the Alberta Women's Institute Girls' Club.[147]

The fifth annual A.W.I.G.C. convention was the first not held jointly with the A.W.I. Lake Edith Camp in Jasper was selected as the site of the convention held on 2, 3, and 4 July 1924. In July 1925 the convention was held in Banff. Delegates participated in competitions for the best bread, kitchen apron, darning, essay, and club report. Lake Edith, Jasper was the site of the 1926 convention. Competitions were featured as well as lectures, demonstrations, hikes, and sight-seeing trips. The 1927 convention was held in Banff and competitions were featured once again. In 1928 the provincial government withdrew its financial support of the A.W.I. and A.W.I.G.C. conventions. The A.W.I.G.C. did not have sufficient funds to finance a convention on its own and in consequence, none was held. However, district conventions were introduced in this year. The first was held in Medicine Hat with Della Kosek, A.W.I.G.C. district director, in charge. This convention was for one day only and the A.W.I. District IV provided the social activities. These included a trip to the greenhouse, candy factory, flour mills, potteries, and a banquet. At the A.W.I.G.C. convention of 1929 which was held in Edmonton, eighty delegates and guests registered. Mrs. J. MacGregor Smith, the current provincial supervisor, was in charge. The 1930 convention was held in Calgary and the 1931 convention was in Edmonton. The annual provincial Girls' Club conventions continued to be held separately from the A.W.I. conventions but the district conferences usually were held jointly with the A.W.I.[148]

From 1932 onward the A.W.I.G.C. annual conventions were held at the Olds School of Agriculture. The twelfth annual convention was held on 5, 6, 7, and 8 July 1932 with Mrs. C. R. Wood, the provincial supervisor, in charge. Delegates at this convention adopted a programme of studies that was similar to the standing committees of the Women's Institutes. Studies were to be conducted in education, home, health, citizenship, nature, and handicraft. Not unlike the Women's Institutes, the emphasis at Girls' Club meetings was to be on educational and social activities. A library collection of papers in standing committees was started in the following year for loan to individual Girls' Clubs. The Act respecting Women's Institutes was amended in 1934 to permit girls as young as age six to join Girls'

Clubs. Girls between the ages of six and fourteen were to belong to Junior Clubs and girls age fifteen and over were to belong to Senior Clubs. At the 1935 convention the delegates amended the Alberta Women's Institute Girls' Club constitution to envelop these changes to the Act. In 1939 the Girls' Clubs celebrated their twenty-first birthday. A copy of their 1939 magazine and a message of loyalty were presented to the Queen on her visit to Canada. At the convention in the following year Mrs. A. B. McGorman assumed her duties as the new A.W.I.G.C. supervisor. The delegates at this convention were treated to a course in dramatics.[149]

Women's Institute Girls' Clubs were valuable social and educational organizations among the rural youth in Alberta. The need for these Clubs was similar to that of the W.I.s in that they supplied a form of social life for young girls and women. In addition to the social activities offered by Girls' Clubs, there was an opportunity to develop various skills related to household science, as well as skills in writing, public speaking, and athletics. Since Girls' Clubs were auxiliaries of Women's Institutes it was not uncommon for girls to work through the junior organization and then join the parent W.I. As such, Girls' Clubs were important vehicles for recruitment to Women's Institutes. But the development of organizations for the boys of rural Alberta also was of concern to the Women's Institutes. As early as 1920 the Ribstone Constituency presented the following resolution at the annual A.W.I. convention:

> WHEREAS, last year by an amendment to the Women's Institute Act, provision was made for Women's Institute Girls' Clubs and
>
> WHEREAS the same need exists for BOYS' CLUBS as for

> GIRLS' CLUBS,
> BE IT RESOLVED that a similar provision be provided for Boys' Clubs through the Fairs and Institutes Branch or in some other way as the Department of Agriculture may determine.[150]

However, it was almost thirty years after the passage of this resolution that the Boys' Club movement got underway in Alberta. The first Boys' Club was the Live Wire Lads formed in Innisfail in 1948. By 1951 there were ten Boys' Clubs in the province and they were led in the same way as the Girls' Clubs, by a W.I. supervisor. Between 1949 and 1952, delegates from Boys' Clubs attended the annual A.W.I.G.C. conventions. At the A.W.I.G.C. convention in 1952 Mrs. McGorman, president of the A.W.I., suggested that Boys' Clubs should not be encouraged under the A.W.I., but that they should be supported by men's organizations. This suggestion was adopted and thereafter, the Boys' Clubs were separate from the Women's Institutes.[151]

Interaction Between W.I.s and Other Women's Clubs

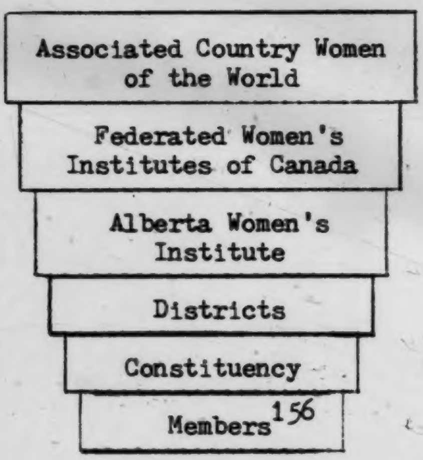
Members of Women's Institutes engaged in frequent interaction with women outside the movement. At the local level this was accomplished in a variety of ways, one of which was to have female visitors attend meetings. Every branch encouraged this practice and the number of visitors at each meeting was noted in the minute books. Local branches also interacted with other women's organizations. They might co-operate together in putting on a social function such as a dance or card party. When special speakers were featured at W.I. meetings other women's clubs often were invited to attend. At the provincial level, interaction between the A.W.I. and other women's organizations was the accepted norm. Delegates from various women's clubs were invited to attend every provincial convention. Each delegate would extend greetings to the A.W.I. in the form of a short speech. For example, at the second annual convention in 1916 greetings were offered by Mrs. Tory from the Women's Canadian Club, by Mrs. Knight from the Local Council of Women, and by Mrs. Parlby from the U.F.W.A.[152] Members from Women's Institutes in other Canadian provinces also attended conventions whenever possible. At the A.W.I. Constituency Conveners' Conferences in 1918, members were appointed to the following Standing Committees of the National Council of Women as W.I. representatives: Agriculture for Women, Fine and Applied Arts, Professions and Employments for Women, Press, Education, Public Health, Baby Welfare, Care of Mentally Deficient, Citizenship, Laws, Household Economics, Nursing, and Supervised Playgrounds.[153] Thus, the Women's Institutes of Alberta interacted at every level with individual women and with women's clubs.

Women's Institutes enhanced their public relations image through advertising. Usually this was done by entering displays at Agricultural Fairs and other events which drew large numbers of people. At the provincial level, advertising was achieved through annual exhibits at the Canadian National Exhibition (C.N.E.) in Toronto. The first exhibit, sent in 1925, was entitled "The Alberta Pantry" and it featured Alberta grown products. The second exhibit, sent in 1926, consisted of demonstrations in the use of eggs and dairy products; these were performed before a background of Alberta products. The third A.W.I. exhibit, sent to the 1927 C.N.E., illustrated the influence of the Women's Institutes in Alberta on education and better schools. In 1928 the C.N.E. exhibit was placed in charge of the Wetaskiwin Girls' Club; no exhibit was sent in 1929. However, in 1930 the A.W.I. arranged for an exhibit featuring the W.I. work in furthering Child Welfare and Public Health. In 1931 the A.W.I. joined the Women's Institutes of every Canadian province in entering one W.I. exhibit at the C.N.E.; Alberta's section was handicraft.[154] In providing exhibits for the C.N.E. on an annual basis the Women's Institutes made use of an excellent public relations vehicle. At relatively little cost to themselves, the W.I.s were able to advertise their movement to great numbers of eastern Canadians.

W.I.s and the Provincial Government

The extent to which a government was willing to interact with the Women's Institutes depended upon the particular party in power. From 1905 until 1920 the Liberal party had formed the government and administered the province. During that time the Women's Institutes in Alberta were associated quite closely with the provincial government. While there was no form of government support involved in the initiation of the movement in 1909, (the year in which the Lea Park W.I. was founded), Mrs. Graham had repeatedly requested government support; it was refused. Apart from the Lea Park W.I., no other Institute was formed in the province until 1912, when the Department of Agriculture began active recruitment through the use of Demonstration Trains staffed by qualified personnel. In that year provision was made in the legislature for the payment of annual grants of five dollars to Women's Institutes, and a Superintendent of Women's Institutes was appointed. By 1919 the foundations of the Women's Institutes were in place. There was a provincial organization entitled the Alberta Women's Institute, there were district and constituency structures, and there was a national organization entitled the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. In 1919 the Liberal government sought to strengthen and entrench the provincial structures through passage of the Women's Institute Act. This Act outlined the objects of the Women's Institutes and it set guidelines for individual Institutes regarding formation, operation, membership, officers, committees, and meetings. Provisions were made in the Act for a Superintendent, grants, directors' meetings, annual conventions, a provincial advisory board, and Girls' Clubs. Also included in the Act were three sample certificates: the first was an application form for prospective Institutes, the second was an affidavit verifying application, and the third was a certificate of incorporation for individual Women's Institute Girls' Clubs.[155]

The following illustration depicts the organizational structure of the Women's Institutes:


Associated Country Women of the World
Federated Women's Institutes of Canada
Alberta Women's Institute
Districts
Constituency
Members[156]

It was the members who supported the structure and as such they formed the most significant part of the organization. What is particularly noteworthy is that almost the entire structure was in place by 1919.

The sole exception was the Associated Country Women of the World which did not form until 1933. At least part of the reason for the relatively rapid formation of the branch, constituency, district, and A.W.I. organizations in Alberta was attributable to the involvement of the provincial government.

In the 1920s the relationship between the Women's Institutes and the provincial government underwent considerable alteration. These changes were wrought during the fourteen year tenure of the United Farmers of Alberta government. The victory of the U.F.A. in the provincial election of 1921 came as a complete surprise to the farmers. The U.F.A. had captured thirty-nine of fifty-nine seats, the Dominion Labour Party won four seats, the Liberals won thirteen, the Independents won two, and the Conservatives won one seat.[157] What the U.F.A. actually had expected to attain by participating in the election was the introduction of a farmers' group into the legislature. They had not anticipated winning an actual majority. The victory, therefore, upset the U.F.A.'s plans for becoming an occupational group in the legislature, and thrust them into a position "as custodians of the interests of others whom they wish were there themselves to look after their own interests."[158] Herbert Greenfield, vice-president of the U.F.A., was nominated premier of the first administration; J. E. Brownlee was appointed Attorney-General.[159] Greenfield resigned in 1925 and was succeeded as premier by J. E. Brownlee. Just prior to the defeat of the U.F.A. government in 1935, R. G. Reid became the U.F.A. premier.

Throughout the tenure of the U.F.A. government there was a gradual tapering off of government involvement with the Women's Institutes. It began in 1921 with the abrupt dismissal of Miss Mary MacIsaac as Superintendent of Women's Institutes. The reason for her dismissal was not disclosed even though the A.W.I. sent a delegation to interview the Cabinet. All that could be ascertained was that Miss MacIsaac had been charged by the government with "extravagance."[160] In the spring of the following year Miss Bess McDermand was dismissed as Assistant Superintendent of Women's Institutes. Her dismissal certainly could not have been related to her qualifications for the position. She was a graduate of the Macdonald Institute in Guelph and she had a B.Sc. degree from Teacher's College at Columbia University. Her areas of specialization were education, household economics, sociology, and household arts. Nor was her dismissal related to her ability to carry out the job because she later became Superintendent of Women's Institutes in Ontario.[161] After dismissing the Superintendents the U.F.A. government then passed a new Women's Institute Act which removed the W.I.s from their position as a branch of the Department of Agriculture. The Women's Institutes were placed with other women's organizations under the administration of Miss Jessie MacMillan, Director of Women's Extension Service.[162]

The government's next action regarding the Women's Institutes was to abolish the payment of railway fares for delegates to the annual conventions. A W.I. delegation immediately set off for the Minister's office and the result was a compromise wherein the expenses of the Advisory Board to conventions and the rent for convention halls would continue to be met by the government. Nevertheless, the W.I.s still had to find a way in which to raise funds for the railway fares of delegates to conventions. Fortunately, a Provincial Fund consisting of voluntary contributions from Women's Institutes had been started in 1920, and in 1921 the Fund had been formally established on the basis of an annual levy of five dollars per Institute. To meet the new need for railway fares, a resolution was passed at the 1922 convention which required that each Institute contribute to the Fund at the rate of fifty cents per member. At the 1927 convention another resolution was passed which set the minimum dues to be paid by an Institute to the Provincial Fund at eight dollars. At the 1923 convention the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. George Hoadley, asked the A.W.I. to request that the government discontinue its annual grants of ten dollars to individual Institutes and five dollars to individual Girls' Clubs. The fact that the A.W.I. refused to comply was of little consequence because at the 1924 session of the legislature these grants were cut off. Further, the Women's Institutes lost their rather prestigious position as the only medium through which short courses, demonstrations, and lectures from the Department of Agriculture were available.[163]

To 1928 the U.F.A. government had made generous grants for women's work and the A.W.I. had shared in the benefits. However, with the passage of the Home Bureau Act in 1928 these grants were discontinued. The prospect of no financial assistance posed a serious threat to the future of the Women's Institutes in the province. An A.W.I. delegation proposed to the Minister of Agriculture that the government provide a readjustment fund for the Women's Institutes which would be graduated down over a period of five years. This was granted with the result that between 1928 and 1932 a gradually diminishing sum was allotted to the A.W.I.[164] Moves on the part of the A.W.I. to generate revenue resulted in the raising of provincial dues to one dollar per member and investment in a two thousand dollar bond in 1929 and a one thousand dollar bond in 1930.[165] By 1932, the final year of government assistance, the A.W.I. had become financially self-sufficient. In this sense, the U.F.A. actually had done a service for the Women's Institutes. By gradually removing the W.I.s' dependence on government, the U.F.A. had aided the Institutes of Alberta in becoming financially autonomous entities.

In the spring of 1935 the U.F.A. government made plans to revive its extension work for women. Miss Isabel Alexander was appointed as the new Director and the necessary steps were being taken for the work to begin. However, in the provincial election of 23 August 1935, not a single U.F.A. candidate was elected. The new Social Credit party under William Aberhart ruled the day. Within a few weeks Miss Alexander was dismissed. By 1939 the Social Credit government was prepared to offer services to the women's organizations in Alberta. In that year the government began offering demonstrations, lectures, and correspondence courses for all women's clubs. The following year a Supervisor of Home Economics Extension Service was appointed.[166] Since that time the Women's Institutes have utilized District Home Economists as resource personnel in planning some of their programmes for meetings. This practice has continued through to the present day.

The foregoing summary of the activities of Women's Institutes at the local and provincial levels indicates that they were not an introverted, selfish organization concerned solely with the wants and desires of the membership. Women's Institutes in Alberta also reached outward in order to bring improvements to individuals and to communities. In this way Women's Institutes not only enriched the lives of rural women, they also attempted to make an impact upon Albertan society. If their contributions to the schools, to the war effort, to medical facilities, to community buildings, to the suffrage cause, to young girls, and to community social life were to serve as any indication, then the Women's Institutes were a tremendous success.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

[1] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 9, 10, 11 March 1918.

[2] Ibid., Meeting of 11, 12, 13, 14 March 1919.

[3] Mrs. Lillian Hansen, Munson W.I., personal letter, 1983 and Mrs. Bernice Abell, Secretary, Kinniburgh W.I., personal letter, 22 November 1982.

[4] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 38.

[5] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 16, 17, 18, 19 March 1920.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., Meeting of 11, 12, 13, 14 March 1919.

[8] See the section on leadership in Chapter III.

[9] Mrs. Rebecca Olson, Loyalist W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[10] Mrs. Shirley Wraight, Veteran W.I., personal letter, 16 December 1982.

[11] Langdon Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 January 1934 to 1 December 1937.

[12] Mrs. J. Worrall, Mountain View W.I., personal letter, April 1983.

[13] Mrs. Alice Zeeb, Secretary, Walsh W.I., personal letter, 6 December 1982.

[14] Mrs. Bernice Abell, Secretary, Kinniburgh W.I., personal

letter, 22 November 1982.

[15] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[16] Munson Women's Institute, Munson and District (Munson, Alberta: Munson Centennial Book Committee, 1967), p. 261.

[17] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[18] Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood, Rugby W.I., personal letter, 8 January 1983.

[19] Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983.

[20] Mrs. Gertie Hawkwood, Glendale W.I., personal letter, 29 December 1982 and Langdon Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 January 1934 to 1 December 1937.

[21] Mrs. Shirley Wraight, Veteran W.I., personal letter, 16 December 1982.

[22] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country" by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[23] Mrs. Lillian Hansen, Munson W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[24] Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter, 6 January 1983.

[25] Mrs. Rebecca Olson, Loyalist W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[26] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[27] Mrs. Gladys A. Doherty, Westlock W.I., personal letter, 21 January 1983.

[28] Munson Women's Institute, Munson and District, p. 261.

[29] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[30] Mrs. Kathleen Code, Springvale W.I., personal letter, 11 December 1982.

[31] "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981" (pamphlet).

[32] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 11 March 1911 to 21 December 1912, Meeting of 22 March 1912.

[33] Mrs. Shirley Wraight, Veteran W.I., personal letter, 16 December 1982.

[34] Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983.

[35] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[36] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 11, 12, 13, 14 March 1919.

[37] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 21.

[38] Mrs. Gladys A. Doherty, Westlock W.I., personal letter, 21 January 1983.

[39] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country" by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[40] Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood, Rugby W.I., personal letter, 8 January 1983.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[43] Mrs. Alice Zeeb, Secretary, Walsh W.I., personal letter, 6 December 1982.

[44] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 11.

[45] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 9, 10, 11 March 1918.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Candace Savage, Our Nell: A Scrapbook Biography of Nellie McClung (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1979), pp. 135-136.

[49] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 9, 10, 11 March 1918.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Mrs. J. Worrall, Mountain View W.I., personal letter, April 1983.

[52] Mrs. Marjory Smith, Penhold W.I., personal letter, 11 February 1983.

[53] Mrs. Lillian Hansen, Munson W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[54] Mrs. Alice Zeeb, Secretary, Walsh W.I., personal letter, 6 December 1982.

[55] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 10 November 1919.

[56] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 14.

[57] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[58] Mrs. Charlotte Stange, Falun W.I., personal letter, 20 December 1982.

[59] Mrs. Bernice Barrett, Aldersyde W.I., personal letter, 13 January 1983.

[60] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter,

7 December 1982.

[61] "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981" (pamphlet).

[62] Mrs. Shirley Wraight, Veteran W.I., personal letter, 16 December 1982.

[63] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country" by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[64] Mrs. Rebecca Olson, Loyalist W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[65] Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter, 6 January 1983.

[66] Mrs. Gladys A. Doherty, Westlock W.I., personal letter, 21 January 1983.

[67] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 27.

[68] Ibid., p. 11.

[69] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[70] Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1982.

[71] "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981" (pamphlet).

[72] Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter, 6 January 1983.

[73] Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood, Rugby W.I., personal letter, 8 January 1983.

[74] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meetings of 14, 15, 16 March 1917 and 9, 10, 11 March 1918.

[75] Mrs. Bernice Abell, Secretary, Kinniburgh W.I., personal letter, 22 November 1982.

[76] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," p. 23.

[77] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 1 and 2 March 1916.

[78] Ibid., Meeting of 9, 10, 11 March 1918.

[79] Ibid., Meeting of 11, 12, 13, 14 March 1919.

[80] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[81] See pages 171 ff. of this chapter for a discussion of some of the buildings erected by Women's Institutes for medical purposes.

[82] Mrs. Rebecca Olson, Loyalist W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[83] Alberta Women's Institutes, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 11, 12, 13, 14 March 1919.

[84] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[85] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 9, 10, 11 March 1918.

[86] Ibid., Meeting of 11, 12, 13, 14 March 1919.

[87] Mrs. Bernice Abell, Secretary, Kinniburgh W.I., personal letter, 22 November 1982.

[88] Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Secretary, Boyle W.I., personal letter, 7 December 1982.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[91] Mrs. Charlotte Stange, Falun W.I., personal letter, 20 December 1982.

[92] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 February 1909 to 11 March 1911, Meeting of 19 October 1910.

[93] Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983 and Langdon W.I. Programme 1929.

[94] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[95] "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981" (pamphlet).

[96] Mrs. Rebecca Olson, Loyalist W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[97] Langdon W.I. Programmes 1938 and 1939.

[98] Mrs. Charlotte Stange, Falun W.I., personal letter, 20 December 1982.

[99] Mrs. F. C. Hanes. From Mrs. Gertie Hawkwood, Glendale W.I., personal letter, 29 December 1982.

[100] Mrs. Shirley Wraight, Veteran W.I., personal letter, 16 December 1982.

[101] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 11 March 1911 to 21 December 1912, Meeting of May 1912.

[102] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[103] Mrs. Kathleen Code, Springvale W.I., personal letter, 11 December 1982.

[104] Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter, 6 January 1983.

[105] Langdon W.I. Programmes 1920s and 1930s and "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981" (pamphlet).

[106] Lea Park Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 3 February 1909 to 11 March 1911, Meeting of 25 June 1909.

[107] Ibid., Meeting of 1 July 1909.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Mrs. Lillian Hansen, Munson W.I., personal letter, 1983 and Mrs. Marjory Smith, Penhold W.I., personal letter, 11 February 1983.

[110] A.W.I., The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 40.

[111] Mrs. Marjory Smith, Penhold W.I., personal letter, 11 February 1983 and A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," pp. 41-42.

[112] Mrs. Marjory Smith, Penhold W.I., personal letter, 11 February 1983.

[113] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 42.

[114] Mrs. Alice Zeeb, Secretary, Walsh W.I., personal letter, 6 December 1982.

[115] Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter, 6 January 1983.

[116] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 36.

[117] Ibid., p. 37.

[118] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[119] Ibid., pp. 40-41.

[120] James H. Gray, *Booze: The Impact of Whiskey on the Prairie West* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1972), pp. 82 and 87.

[121] Ibid., pp. 105-107.

[122] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 11, 12, 13, 14 March 1919.

[123] E. R. Forbes, "Prohibition and the Social Gospel in Nova Scotia," in *Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth-*

Century Canada, eds. Clark, Grayson, and Grayson, p. 75.

[124] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 27, 28, 29 June 1921.

[125] A member of the U.F.A. administration wrote this letter to Mrs. Helen O. Risinger on 11 December 1922 (Acc. No. 69.289, File No. 97A, microfilm, Provincial Archives).

[126] Gray, Booze, p. 207.

[127] Mrs. Gladys A. Doherty, Westlock W.I., personal letter, 21 January 1983.

[128] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country" by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983.

[129] Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood, Rugby W.I., personal letter, 3 January 1983.

[130] Catherine Llye Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, with an Introduction by Ramsay Cook (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950; reprint ed., 1978), pp. 72-73.

[131] Alberta Women's Institutes, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 1 and 2 March 1916.

[132] Ibid.

[133] "Technically, Alberta was the third province to enfranchise women. Although the legislature of Alberta was the second in the dominion to vote for woman suffrage (on Mar. 6), royal assent was not granted until April 19. The Saskatchewan legislature meanwhile passed its suffrage bill on Mar. 14 and royal assent was granted that same day." Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement, footnote, p. 66. Manitoba was the first province to enfranchise women on 28 January 1916.

[134] Mrs. A. Houston, Mary Riley W.I. (was Garrington W.I.), personal letter, 19 May 1983.

[135] Mrs. Gladys A. Doherty, Westlock W.I., personal letter, 21 January 1983.

[136] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 16, 17, 18, 19 March 1920.

[137] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 68.

[138] The Women's Institute Act, (Being Chapter 21 of the Statutes of Alberta, 1916, with 1919 Amendments (Acc. No. 69.289, File No. 17, microfilm, Provincial Archives), section 41, subsections 1 and 2.

[139] Ibid., section 28.

[140] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 11, 12, 13, 14 March 1919.

[141] Mrs. Bertha Rands, Secretary, Argyle W.I., personal letter, December 1982; "Warspite Women's Institute, 1921-1981," (pamphlet); and Mrs. Alice Zeeb, Secretary, Walsh W.I., personal letter, 6 December 1982.

[142] "Memories of Burdett's Fifty Years for Home and Country" by Mrs. John Neil, 8 August 1971. From Mrs. Dori Campbell, Burdett W.I., personal letter, 28 January 1983; Mrs. Betty Hocken, Secretary, Gordon W.I., personal letter, 8 February 1983; Mrs. Florence Cameron, Independence W.I., personal letter, 6 January 1983; Mrs. Dorothy Hosegood, Rugby W.I., personal letter, 8 January 1983; and Mrs. Bernice Abell, Secretary, Kinniburgh W.I., personal letter, 22 November 1982.

[143] Mrs. Lillian Hansen, Munson W.I., personal letter, 1983.

[144] Munson Women's Institute, Munson and District, p. 266.

[145] Ibid., p. 140.

[146] This probably occurred in the 1940s. Munson Women's Institute, Munson and District, p. 179.

[147] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," pp. 68-69.

[148] Ibid., pp. 69-70.

[149] Ibid, pp. 70-71.

[150] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 16, 17, 18, 19 March 1920.

[151] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," pp. 73-74.

[152] Alberta Women's Institute, Minutes of Meetings from 17, 18, 19 February 1915 to 31 May 1924, Meeting of 1 and 2 March 1916.

[153] Ibid., Meetings of May 1918.

[154] A.W.I., "A Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1937," pp. 20-25.

[155] The Women's Institute Act, (Being Chapter 21 of the Statutes of Alberta, 1916, with 1919 Amendments).

[156] Alberta Women's Institutes, "The Five W's" (pamphlet).

[157] Anthony Mardiros, William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie Radical (Toronto: James Lorimar & Company, Publishers, 1979), p. 110.

[158] Manitoba Free Press, 6 August 1921, p. 25, quoted in W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, with a Foreword by S. D. Clark (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 218.

[159] Morton, Progressive Party in Canada, p. 217.

[160] From a newspaper clipping in the A.W.I. minute book.

[161] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 13.

[162] Ibid., p. 14.

[163] Ibid., pp. 12-16.

[164] Ibid., p. 17.

[165] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[166] Ibid., p. 21.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Within a space of thirty-one years from 1909 until 1940, Women's Institutes had become irreversibly etched into the fabric of rural life in Alberta. During this time the W.I.s grew and flourished. The intent of this thesis has been to examine the enormity of the role which the Women's Institute movement played in the lives of rural women, particularly in the realms of education and social interaction. An additional area of inquiry has been the organization's involvement in and contribution to the quality of community life in Alberta.

In Chapter I the Women's Institutes were set within the context of the general rise of women's organizations in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The value of these organizations both to the membership and to Canadian society was explored briefly. A survey of the literature available on the topic of Women's Institutes revealed a major dearth of information and highlighted the necessity of consulting primary sources such as archival materials and records in the possession of local branches of Women's Institutes. The basic assumption of the thesis was that the Women's Institutes in Alberta took root and flourished as a social movement. This assumption was reflected in the organization of the thesis which was based upon a theoretical framework for social movements.

Social movements generally arise out of some form of discontent with certain conditions in society. Chapter II focussed upon the major societal forces operating in Canada and in Alberta prior to the initiation of the Women's Institutes as a means by which to illuminate the conditions which engendered discontent. At the national level, discontent arose from the ill effects of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. In the west, these were exacerbated by additional economic and political factors which gave rise to the farmers' movement. Discontent was then traced to the rural level where it was manifested in a lack of educational, recreational, and social opportunities, as well as in the sorry conditions of labor under which rural women operated on farms. This was followed by a consideration of the response on the part of women's organizations in general, and the Women's Institutes in particular, to the conditions of discontent in Canadian society. Women saw certain evils in society which they wished to help eradicate. They also became aware of the loneliness and isolation which their own limited spheres offered them and this they particularly wished to change. Hence, the women of rural Alberta were in a frame of mind for improvement in their own lives and in society: they were ready for the Women's Institutes.

Chapter III detailed the origins of the W.I. movement in Alberta and attempted an explanation of its rapid spread and success in terms of three factors. The first element was the widespread acceptance of the movement's ideology which may be described as a form of maternal feminism, similar to those of all Canadian women's organizations at the time. More specifically, the W.I. ideology was encompassed in the motto: 'For Home and Country'. Women's Institutes were dedicated to improving home conditions, social conditions, and economic conditions; their tool was education. Under the second element of mobilization, which was leadership, biographies were presented on each of the A.W.I. presidents. The third element of mobilization, effective means of communication, discussed the way in which the movement was publicized. These included word-of-mouth, Demonstration Trains, the provincial government, letters, newspapers, and radio.

Using examples from the records of over twenty-five local Women's Institutes in the province, Chapter IV dealt with the subject of what members did within the organization. Their activities were divided into the two broad categories of educational and social interaction. The Standing Committees formed the basis of the educational activities of the Women's Institutes. Members wrote reports on the topics of food and nutrition, health, education, legislation, agriculture, Canadian industries, and history. Demonstrations, lectures, and talks were featured at meetings, and members regularly participated in short courses. Social activities and their significance to the movement also were considered. The activities of the A.W.I. as they related to the membership were traced from the inception of the provincial organization in 1915.

The records of local Women's Institutes were again used in Chapter V to explore the external activities of the Institutes in terms of what they did for their communities. Rural schools were an area in which the Women's Institutes took an active role by providing parties, contests, concerts, fairs, and scholarships for the children. The Institutes were active during the First World War in raising money, in sending items to enlisted men overseas, and in doing work for the Red Cross. Large scale relief was provided to communities in times of need, but the Institutes also took every opportunity to meet the needs of individuals. Members held clinics in their homes in order to help raise the standards of health in their communities, and they built hospitals, maternity homes, rest rooms, and community halls for the benefit of all. Local branches of Women's Institutes often assumed the responsibility for providing a social life for their communities; to this end they sponsored dances, parties, dinners, plays, concerts, and annual picnics. Beginning in 1919 the Institutes sponsored Girls' Clubs in their communities as auxiliary organizations. The concluding section of the chapter was on the special relationship between the Women's Institutes and the government of Alberta.

The Women's Institute movement in Alberta actually experienced two births, the first in 1909 with the founding of the Lea Park W.I., and the second in 1912 when the provincial government began organizing local Institutes. For the next nine years the provincial government directed considerable energy toward creating a strong Women's Institute movement. Together with the work and enthusiasm of the female participants, a solid organizational structure was erected involving local branches, constituencies and districts, and an umbrella organization at the provincial level, the Alberta Women's Institute.

In the 1920s the movement continued its process of birth and growth with new Institutes being founded and their operational structures set in place. But the Women's Institutes were firmly enough established that they were able to shift their emphasis to a new stage, that of developing and carrying out programmes. For W.I. members, the programmes were of an educational and social nature; for communities, the programmes were aimed at education, entertainment, and aid. Just as the movement continued to experience growth in the 1920s, so the process of developing programmes had been initiated in the previous decade. Hence, there was considerable overlap in the activities of the two decades. The principal difference in the 1920s was that the provincial government had begun a gradual process of withdrawal from its involvement in the Women's Institute movement. Each stage of withdrawal meant new responsibilities for the Women's Institutes.

By the early 1930s the process was complete. The provincial government had withdrawn from the W.I. movement and, as a consequence, the W.I.s had gained autonomy. This new situation was met with a considerable amount of apprehension and insecurity, particularly on the part of the A.W.I. executive. They were plagued by the question as to whether the movement would falter and fail once it was set on its own resources. However, the fact was that the movement did not falter and it certainly did not fail. Rather, it quickly gained its footing and assumed the reins of control. The reason why the Women's Institutes were able to carry on even after the government had ceased to direct them was attributable to the strong organizational framework which had been laid in the early years of the movement. By the 1930s, much of the movement was routinized even while it continued to grow and evolve. For example, there was an established procedure by which new Institutes were organized. Thus, a particular Institute may have been new but the guidelines for its organization already were in place. Similarly, the programmes of the Women's Institutes had been routinized by the 1930s. Although the Institutes introduced new topics for study, this was done within the framework of the Standing Committees.

It would be unthinkable that a movement as popular and as vibrant as the Women's Institutes would not make some contribution to its host society and, indeed, Alberta benefited in many ways. Those communities in the province that were fortunate enough to have Women's Institute branches received the benefits of social and educational activities, they received community halls, hospitals, clinics, rest rooms, and maternity homes, and they received aid with schools and with children, particularly with young girls. Women's Institutes even provided the provincial government with an opportunity to work with women and to participate in some of their activities. Most importantly, however, was the contribution which Women's Institutes made in dispelling loneliness and isolation in the lives of rural women in Alberta. Women's Institutes gave females an opportunity for social interaction and mental stimulation, they helped women develop a positive outlook on life.

It is hoped that this thesis will aid in dispelling the misconceptions prevalent in the literature on women's organizations regarding Women's Institutes. It should now be evident that the Women's Institutes were not interested in exchanging recipes, kitchen hints, and gossip. Rather, they were an educational organization of rural women who were interested in directing their energies 'For Home and Country'. These are among the noblest of goals.

POSTSCRIPT: 1940 TO 1983

Many of the broad outlines for the programmes and activities carried out by the Women's Institutes were well established by 1940. To this extent they had become a matter of routine--a situation which served the Institutes well in future decades. Even though the details of programmes and activities varied considerably, the basic structures remained the same. This was because the needs of rural women in Alberta had not altered drastically. Women still desired the opportunities for social interaction and mental stimulation which the W.I.s offered to them. In order to illustrate the fact of routinization, some of the activities of the Women's Institutes to present day will be considered. Since the period after 1940 actually lies outside the scope of this thesis, the survey will be brief. The selections dealt with in each decade are intended to be representative of the entire decade.

1940s

Much of the work done by the Women's Institutes in the first half of the 1940s was related to the war effort. Articles of food and clothing were sent overseas, and Red Cross work was performed. Generally, the contributions of the Women's Institutes during the Second World War were the same as those made in the First World War. Specific examples of the work done by the Women's Institutes in the First and Second World Wars are dealt with in Chapter V.[1] In the second half of the 1940s the peacetime work of the Women's Institutes carried on along the same lines as it always had done. The A.W.I. convention marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Women's Institutes in Canada. Among the activities was the establishment of a Cancer Fund to aid the province in cancer research. The delegates also voted Mrs. Morton as Alberta's representative at the Associated Country Women of the World conference to be held in Amsterdam in September of 1947. Hence, Mrs. Morton attended the A.C.W.W. conference as one of over five hundred women concerned with improving world conditions. The goals set at the World conference were: "(1) to improve the status of country women the world over, (2) to become a voice for women in international affairs, (3) to become the guardian of the integrity of the human spirit."[2]

1950s

During the 1950s the general structure and routine of the Women's Institutes remained intact. The twenty-ninth convention of the Alberta Women's Institutes, held at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, on 30 May to 2 June 1955 was indicative of all the conventions held throughout the decade. On the first day of the convention, delegates and visitors divided into discussion groups under the subjects of Publicity and the Duties of Officers, Money Matters and A.W.I. Projects, Conferences, Programme Planning, and Standing Committees. The findings of the discussion group on Standing Committees were as follows:

> Standing Committees--It was the concensus of opinion that these were the backbone of our organization, making us different from other organizations and raising the standard

> of our groups and members. Many favored the idea of short articles on all, or several, of the committees at each meeting rather than lengthy papers once a year. Most were agreed that a short paper, prepared by the chairman, was of more value both to her and the meeting than getting someone else's paper from the loan collection. Give papers on a topic on which you are well-informed and in which you are really interested, then make it of more value to the meeting by inviting discussion--see that the appointed chairman is particularly interested in the work of her committee. Visits, or tours, to places of interest and demonstrations were found valuable aids to self-education. Having paper reports given at the beginning of the meeting was also suggested. Some had received good material on United Nations from Grade 12 books--Better Living and Social Living.[3]

The Women's Institutes in Alberta had had Standing Committees for approximately forty years, yet at the end of this time the members still viewed the Committees as "the backbone" of the organization. They had no intention of abolishing this structure. However, the members were interested in methods of improving the internal workings of the Committees as a means by which to enhance local meetings.

One of the many addresses at the convention was by Mrs. V. G. Macdonald who spoke on the services available from the Extension Department of the Department of Agriculture. Mrs. Macdonald underlined that Alberta was the first province to appoint District Home Economists and that the department presently had seventeen in their employ. Women's Institutes often relied upon District Home Economists for information on all phases of homemaking. Dean W. Bowker of the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta spoke on the Status of Women regarding property rights and wills. He concluded that women in Alberta were fairly treated and that they had little legitimate cause for complaint. This was followed by a lively discussion period.[4]

Sixteen resolutions were presented at the convention. They ranged in subjects from the establishment of a full-time Guidance Clinic to serve Southern Alberta, to the introduction of a pension for unmarried women between the ages of sixty and sixty-four similar to that already provided for widows in Alberta. Some of the other resolution topics included a request for the elimination of the sales tax on the drugs and dressings purchased by the Canadian Cancer Society; that desertion be included by the federal government as grounds for divorce; and that the Supervisor of Child Welfare for Alberta be a person holding a Master's degree in Welfare and having supervisory experience with a reputable welfare organization.[5]

At the 1955 convention the provincial conveners of Standing Committees each reported on the activities of the local branches and constituencies. They then presented outlines of suggested topics to be studied by the two hundred and seventy-eight local branches of Women's Institutes from 1955 to 1957. For the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Canadian Industries the suggested study topics were conservation, Canada's part in the Colombo Plan, the United Nations' agricultural and technical assistance agencies, world gardens, by-products of basic industries native to Alberta, and the Alberta Labor Act. The topics to be studied under Citizenship included immigration, the status of women, civil defence, and international news as given by radio, television, and the press. A number of topics were suggested for study under the Standing Committee for Education. Some of these included preparing your child for school, rural education of today, parent-teacher relationship, modern teaching methods, the Enterprise System of teaching, radio school broadcasts, and the Schools of Agriculture and Home Economics. Those topics suggested under Health were arthritis, the National Health Plan, safety, drugs, the handling of foods, and senior citizens. The study topics for Home Economics included meal planning and preparation, new materials and their care, home planning and equipment, and home decorating. The main topic of study for the Standing Committee on United Nations and Exchange Programmes was to be the study of Ceylon.[6]

The A.W.I. convention of 1955 illustrates that W.I. activities in the 1950s were quite similar to those practiced prior to 1940. In addition, Home and Country, the quarterly publication of the Alberta Women's Institutes, continued to fulfill its function of keeping all members abreast of W.I. issues. The publications from the 1950s contained reports from all the W.I. districts and A.W.I. conventions, news on Girls' Clubs, the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, and the Associated Country Women of the World. There was a regular column by Mrs. Cornelia Wood, M.L.A., entitled "Random Thoughts on This and That," as well as numerous interesting articles such as "Some Tips on the Art of Relaxing," "Giving and Taking Criticism," "Good Reading for Boys and Girls," and "W.I.s and Civil Defence."[7] The enthusiasm which members maintained for the W.I. movement in the 1950s is exhibited in the following "Rally Song" found in the March 1951 issue of Home and Country:

RALLY SONG

Tune: "Jingle Bells"

I recollect the time, not so many years ago,
When I felt dull and blue and tho't the
world was slow!
I got into a rut and I would fume and fret,

Until I joined the Institute, the greatest
helper yet.

CHORUS
Institute, Institute, don't forget the day
Plan your work a week ahead, so you can
get away,
Institute, Institute, here we gladly meet,
All our friends and neighbors, too, we fondly,
gaily meet.

So my advice to you is, sisters don't delay
But join the Institute, yes, join with us
today
Our worthy motto is: "For Home and
Country" dear,
So help us make of Canada, a land we may
revere.

CHORUS[8]

The July 1957 edition of Home and Country reported the current A.W.I. statistics. These are contained in the following table:[9]

	Constituencies	Branches	Members	Girls' Clubs
District I	3	24	487	9
District II	9	73	1,354	7
District III	10	74	1,340	14
District IV	7	58	1,222	10
District V	8	55	917	3
Totals	37	284	5,320	43

1960s

An A.W.I. convention that was indicative of the activities staged throughout the 1960s was that held at the University of Alberta, Edmonton on 4, 5, and 6 June 1963. Among the speakers present at this convention were Mrs. Roberts and Mrs. H. G. Ridley, both of whom had attended the A.C.W.W. conference held in Australia in October 1962. All the meetings at the World conference were held in English and a number of delegates had learned the language for the occasion.

Mr. T. Reginald Kelly, Superintendent of the Saddle Lake Indian Agency and "a descendent of Haida Indian royalty," spoke from first hand knowledge on the problems between Indian and white people. Dr. D. F. Cameron, Assistant Dean, Faculty of Medicine, spoke to the delegates on the topic of "Doctors of Tomorrow." Various A.W.I. projects designed to mark Canada's centennial year in 1967 already were underway at the 1963 convention. These included raising funds for contribution toward establishing Women's Institutes in the North West Territories, a Centennial A.W.I. Scholarship of one thousand dollars for an outstanding student majoring in Social Welfare work, and a contest entitled "Making Alberta More Beautiful" in which W.I.s were to compete in making their communities more attractive.[10]

Only five resolutions were presented at the 1963 convention. One requested that the provincial government compile accident statistics for persons and organizations engaged in accident prevention, a second recommended that A.W.I. provincial dues be raised to two dollars per member, a third suggested that local W.I.s refuse to sponsor magazine salespersons, a fourth requested that Indians be given the same rights to vote in Alberta provincial elections as they had in federal elections, and a fifth suggested that seat belts be made a topic for study by local Women's Institutes.[11]

Reports were presented by the conveners of Standing Committees and outlines of suggested topics to be followed by Women's Institutes from 1963 to 1965 were presented. The Committees had been rearranged to coincide with those at the national level, (F.W.I.C.). Some of the topics suggested by the convener of Agriculture and Canadian Industries were support of 4-H Clubs and youth programmes, a centennial safety project, studies of farm management and efficiency, and support of farm radio forums. The convener of Education and Citizenship suggested that Institutes study changes in education, vocational high schools, adult education, and Indian affairs. Among those topics suggested under Health and Home Economics were Canada's Food Guide, immunization, fluoridation and dental health, social hygiene, alcohol, how I can help my husband avoid a heart attack, and living within my husband's means. The outline for Social Services included community projects, senior citizens, mental health, and the Unitarian Services Committee. Topics for study under the United Nations Standing Committee included UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), WHO (World Health Organization), FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization), and UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund).[12]

There were a total of two hundred and sixty-two Women's Institutes in Alberta in 1963 and each one of them subscribed to Home and Country. Throughout the 1960s this publication brought W.I. members news on the districts, Girls' Clubs, and provincial conventions, as well as information on the happenings at the national and international levels. Beginning in the March 1960 publication, a new feature was added in the form of a "Standing Committee Chairmen's Page" in which provincial conveners distributed advice and encouragement to readers. In the December 1960 edition the A.W.I. reported on a twenty-seven acre wooded park adjoining the University of Alberta, Edmonton, which had been named the "Emily Murphy Park." Emily Murphy died in 1933; at the official opening of the park the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board awarded her with its highest honor in naming her a person of national historic importance. Her achievements included a successful writing career, appointment as the first woman magistrate in the British Commonwealth, and leader of the movement for the admission of women to the Senate of Canada. She also was the first president of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.[13] Other articles featured in Home and Country over the 1960s included "Getting the Book Habit Young," "The Art of Laughter," "Divorce Laws Need Overhaul," and "50th Anniversary of Women's Rights in Alta.," (1966) by Mrs. Cornelia Wood, M.L.A.[14]

1970s

The routine and structure developed by the Women's Institutes prior to 1940 continued to serve the movement well in the 1970s. On 9, 10, 11, and 12 June 1975 an A.W.I. convention was held at Olds College. The convention theme was "International Women's Year: Equality, Development, Peace." At the opening ceremonies Mrs. Morrisroe, A.W.I. president, reiterated this theme and urged members to develop themselves to their fullest potential. Convention speakers included Mary Lou Armstrong of the Library Action Committee. She underlined the need for improved library services in Alberta: twenty-five per cent of the population had no access to libraries and some schools still did not have library facilities. At the evening banquet, the Hon. Helen Hunley addressed the delegates on the "Role of Voluntary Organizations in Today's Society," stressing the need for organizations of volunteers like the Women's Institutes.
Mrs. J. McLean, F.W.I.C. president, urged W.I. members to support women running for political offices, and she urged that members remain cognizant with laws affecting women.[15]

Some of the resolutions passed at the 1975 convention were that capital punishment be carried out according to the laws of Canada; that A.W.I. support the Provincial Agriculture Soils from further encroachment by urban housing and industrial expansion; that A.W.I. request that the selling of junk foods be prohibited in all schools; and that legislation be passed whereby both spouses of the farming operation have the option to enter into a partnership and be treated as such under the Income Tax Act.[16]

Two important developments concerning the Women's Institutes of Alberta occurred in 1975. One was the establishment of a permanent provincial office with leased office space, (prior to this time the A.W.I. executive had operated out of their homes). The second was a provincial government grant of twenty-five thousand dollars to assist the organization with its educational programmes:

> The Government announcement stated the major purpose of the Grant was to assist in further developing the leadership this pioneer organization exerts through its two hundred Branches and three thousand members. It stated that the correspondence program in Nutrition currently featured by A.W.I. emphasizes a priority item of the Government. The Grant was given in recognition of the dedication of A.W.I. to the women and families of rural Alberta and is a mark of confidence in their ability to use leadership and innovation to develop better ways to organize and involve rural families in planning their future.[17]

This grant was made in March. By the time of the June convention part of the grant had been used to mail the Nutrition lessons to the branches and to finance a leadership workshop. At the convention delegates divided into discussion groups in order to consider ways of using the grant so that it would benefit entire communities and not simply the Institutes.[18]

1980s

In the first two and one-half years of the 1980s the Women's Institutes in Alberta have exhibited every indication of continuing as a viable force, particularly in the province's rural quarters. The issues with which the Institutes are presently interested include pension reform as it concerns women, producer-consumer concerns, and farm and home safety. The issue of land use is of critical concern to W.I. members. Some of the related problems which they are delving into include the takeover of prime agricultural land by pipelines, powerlines, roads, and acreages; surface rights; foreign investment; and salinity in the soil.[19] A provincial convention was held in Olds from 31 May to 2 June. Miss Shirley Myers, Head of the Home Economics Department at Olds College was a guest speaker, and Senator Martha Bielish headed a workshop on the Associated Country Women of the World. This workshop was in preparation for the A.C.W.W. conference held at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver on 19 to 29 June 1983.[20] Approximately two thousand delegates from sixty-six countries were expected at this conference.[21]

At the invitation of Mrs. Grace Duff, Constituency Convener, this writer was privileged to attend the sixty-seventh annual conference of the Olds Constituency, held on 28 April 1983. This proved to be an excellent opportunity to meet with W.I. members and participate in their activities. The conference was held at the Samis Community Center, a delightful one-room school which still contains the original blackboards. Registration was from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. O'Canada, the W.I. Creed, and the Flag Salute formed the opening exercises, this was followed by a memorial service. The morning was passed in reports by delegates, a Girls' Club report, an address by Mrs. Dorothy Williams, District Director, and a fashion show. A delicious lunch was served by the Samis W.I. At 1:00 p.m. the conference resumed with reports by the educational conveners on agriculture, citizenship and legislation, education and cultural activities, home economics and health, Canadian industries, environmental conservation, handicrafts, and international affairs. Prior to afternoon tea the guest speaker, Mr. Eric Jones, gave an entertaining presentation on farm safety. The second half of the fashion show was presented, and an address was given by a most able speaker, Mrs. Beryl Ballhorn, A.W.I. Second Vice-President.

Thirty-nine W.I. members attended the Olds conference. Eleven members were from the Samis W.I., eleven were from the Glamis W.I., ten members attended from the Coburn W.I., and eight were present from the Mary Riley W.I. which, prior to 1940, was known as the Garrington W.I. The conference concluded at 5:30 p.m.

NOTES TO POSTSCRIPT

[1] See Chapter V, pp. 153 ff.

[2] A.W.I., "The Story of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1909-1955," p. 28.

[3] A.W.I., Report of the Alberta Women's Institutes, 1953-1955, pp. 9-10.

[4] Ibid., pp. 12 and 17.

[5] Ibid., pp. 22-25.

[6] Ibid., pp. 112-119.

[7] Home and Country, vols. IX to XXV, March 1951 to December 1959.

[8] Ibid., vol. IX, no. 1, March 1951.

[9] Ibid., vol. XXIII, no. 2, July 1957.

[10] A.W.I., Report of the Alberta Women's Institutes, 1961-63, pp. 12, 17, 20, 23.

[11] Ibid., p. 24.

[12] Ibid., pp. 96-112.

[13] Home and Country, vol. XXVI, no. 4, December 1960.

[14] Ibid., vols. XXVI to XXXIV, March 1960 to Summer 1967.

[15] A.W.I., "History Supplement of the Alberta Women's Institute, 1956-1975," pp. 43-44.

[16] Ibid., pp. 45-46.

[17] Ibid., p. 39.

[18] Ibid., p. 45.

[19] Home and Country, vol. XLVI, no. 2, Winter 1982.

[20] Ibid., vol. XLVII, no. 1, Spring 1983.

[21] The Edmonton Journal, Monday, 25 April 1983, p. B2.

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